

The Binding Of Satan

Restoring the Peace

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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Have you ever been in the awkward situation where you and friends or family are having a really good time doing something, you are having some sort of fellowship or get together and suddenly another person enters the scene who is a known obnoxious or generally disliked person by everybody else there? Depending on what the person does, he can cause either uneasiness, or anxiety, or some level of perturbation by just about everybody there. He may go so far as to break up the party. Everybody might just decide that the best thing to do is to go home, or cause an argument or fight because that person is generally disliked and obnoxious. Where there had been agreement and peace and everybody having a good time, now there is division, negative feelings, and frustration because this person who is disturbing the peace is present.

So what do you do in such a situation? You could try to make the most of a bad situation, but this often ends up making everybody miserable because nothing is really decided. You just make the most of it. You just get through it. You endure it.

Or you could ignore the unwanted intruder, but because he is probably obnoxious, he will not allow that to happen. They demand attention often times. So most of the time the only way to restore the situation, short of having the unwanted person change his character or personality, is just simply to get rid of him for the sake of everybody else.

In a way, the Day of Atonement begins with such a situation and ends with its resolution. God and man represented by the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, make up the parties who are enjoying themselves in the Garden of Eden until Satan, the unwanted intruder, the obnoxious one—we call him the deceiver, the accuser, and the destroyer—came in and broke everything up. He has caused division, hard feelings, distrust, fear, and separation ever since.

So what is pictured in the Day of Atonement is God's way of throwing the bum out and restoring the peace to the party, to the fellowship. This day is named Atonement, or if you split it out, at-one-ment, a day of accord, a day of unity between God and man, and we are looking forward to this. We really do not have a memorial here unless we are looking at the way it was in the Garden of Eden, because that was the only time when there was any accord between God and man. We are looking *forward* to the time when mankind will be in accord with God.

Satan is a major cause of the present situation, the present separation between God and man and it is his binding, Satan's binding, that will usher in the restitution of all things. That will be a major part in restoring this world, or maybe I should say, restoring conditions to the way they should be between God and man. And particularly, a beneficial relationship between human and Divine that will bridge the way for other blessings and achievements and advancements. Maybe I will mention a few of those later.

Let us review for a few minutes the history of how the separation of God and man came about, and why we have a need for a Day of Atonement. Let us first go to Ezekiel 28. I will be going to a lot of

scriptures that you all know and you have all read many times. Scriptures that Mr. Armstrong went to on many occasions because we are going to be talking about something that I think we all understand. But it is just a review trying to give you meat in due season.

Ezekiel 28:11-15 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God: "You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.'""

God gives us a lot of information about how things were before Helel fell. He was created perfect, wise, full of wisdom, perfect in beauty. He had skills and talents, especially here that is shown is musical talents, probably used in the praise of God. He was wise and beautiful. He was given great position. He was *the* anointed cherub who covers. He was the one who was over God's throne. He was right there in the thick of things throughout all that time. He had everything going for him. This was the perfect specimen of God's creation—beautiful, wise, talented, given the skills and the rank of leadership. And then he spoiled it all through sin.

Let us go to Isaiah 14. It shows a little better, I think, the process of his spoiling. Here God fills in more of the details about this.

Isaiah 14:12-15 "How you are fallen from heaven, O [Helel], son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

Evidently along with being the cherub that covered, along with being the one who walked on the fiery stones, he was also given the earth to govern, because this shows him going up to heaven. He must have been here on the earth. And he was given a throne. He says he would exalt his throne above all the angels of God, all the stars of God. He was given a third evidently to rule with him on the earth, but he wanted to exalt himself above all the angels, not just a third of them.

It seems as God gave him more, Helel began to get greedy until he began to conceive thoughts of having everything for himself, not just the angels, but God's very throne. As it says, "I will be the Most High." He did not want to be just like God. He wanted to **be** God. If God thought so highly of him, maybe he was smart and powerful enough to boot the "old man" out and take over for himself.

So we see the beginnings of the sins that most describe Satan when we think of Satan: vanity, thinking too much of himself, greed for more than was given to him, selfishness, everything for himself, self-exaltation (I will exalt my throne), and pride of course. He felt he was the one. Who knows how long these sins festered in him before they broke out into action. We do not know. It may have been thousands or even millions of years. We do not know how long before God created man that He created the angels.

These sins just festered in him and festered in him until eventually he began to recruit other angels to his cause. He was given a third, but he had to recruit those. He had to work on them. I am sure they did not just fall obediently into line, especially when he was talking about sedition against God. That was not something I think that a righteous angel would assent to very readily. But he began to recruit these angels over time and to plan a coup against the very throne of heaven.

Let us turn now to Revelation 12. This is part of the history of the church. It is stuck in here to show the church's main adversary.

Revelation 12:3-4 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman. . .

We do not need to go over that because it is talking about Satan's opposition to the birth of Christ at that point. But we see that Helel convinced one-third of the angels to follow him, and it has been speculated that they were all those angels that were given to him to govern the earth, that eventually over time he did convince them and they followed him.

From this we can see, as we know, he has formidable powers of persuasion, an uncanny ability to deceive others into doing things to promote his aims, because he is the one who wanted to exalt himself. He is the one who wanted to exalt his throne. He needed the help so he persuaded these other angels, who soon became demons, to help him, but it was his aims that he was looking for. He is the original "slick Willy" if you will. He is the one that is behind that sort of attitude.

Now let us read verses 7-9. I want to read these because I think that even though these are written in a prophetic sense, they describe what probably happened before when Helel finally attacked God's throne.

Revelation 12:7-9 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Who knows how long ago this occurred, but God and His angels, led by Michael, cast Helel—no longer Helel, no longer the bright and morning star, but now known as Satan the Devil, the Deceiver, the Adversary, the Opposition—along with his angels, back to the earth and evidently caused great destruction all over the galaxy. And it is here that they have stayed.

Jude 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain [That proper domain was the earth, and they did not keep it. They did not guard and protect it. They did not stay there. They went up to heaven to try to take over there], but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

God has somehow bound them here to the earth while they are waiting for their ultimate judgment. Here they stay. Here they live. Here they are. They are no longer welcome in heaven, as we saw in

Revelation 12:8. A place was found no more in heaven for them, although we know from the book of Job that Satan is allowed to go before God's throne on occasion. I do not know how often, but from time to time.

This is where they live, on the earth. This is their habitation. This is where they dwell. This is where they stay. And on earth they are still free as far as God allows them to play their tricks and deceptions and prey on mankind.

Now earth was where God had planned to put mankind all along. I am sure that with putting Helel and his angels here, they were instructed to prepare the earth for man. That got derailed a bit when they rebelled and God had to do all the preparing Himself, but He left the location the same—the earth. God recreated the proper environment for us and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, right smack dab in the middle of millions of opponents led by the chief adversary, Satan the Devil. And obviously this was part of His plan. He meant it to be that way because He wants us to overcome and grow.

Here are Adam and Eve, where God put them, in a garden, a paradise. In this paradise, the animals are tame. Adam can walk among them without fear. All the food they needed hung from the trees, there for the picking, evidently ripe all year round. They did not have to do a whole lot. And the most important thing, God Himself walked and talked with them, instructing them how to live and how to please Him. God asked them only to tend the garden, to keep it in the state in which He had created it.

What a life! Could you imagine? We have nothing to compare with that at all because we are bound under the curses that have been inflicted upon us because of the sins that we commit. But God only had one very simple stipulation. We read that in Genesis 2. We are still getting the history of this separation between God and man.

Genesis 2:8-9 The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 2:15-17 Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Now how many thousands of times have we read those scriptures? We have to think that God gave them other instructions, but this was the one that was recorded for us. "Do not eat that tree in the midst of the garden that I call the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil." The reason why this one was written in the record of the Bible is that it was the one that mattered. It was the one that was broken, and what was put in here is for our admonition.

This tree represented a rejection of God's knowledge and taking the prerogative of deciding good and evil, right and wrong, for the self. That is why it was good and evil, because we (man) would take the prerogative of rejecting God's wisdom and God's knowledge and taking it upon ourselves to decide what is right and wrong.

Eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil told God, "Thanks for everything, but we'll be going our own way from here. We don't like you." It is basically what they said. If you want to put it in very simple terms they said, "Well, you've created us a nice environment here, but we'll take over." And that is exactly what they did. This was the biggest mistake that has ever been committed in human history—rejecting the Creator.

Now we know the story from this point. Satan the Deceiver, the Accuser, the Destroyer (he goes by many names) planted the suggestion that God was not being fair, that He had told them a lie, that God was keeping all the very best for Himself, that He was holding them back somehow, because if they just did what He said not to do, they would be gods. They would be on God's level. In forbidding them to take of this fruit, He was holding them back.

So in their vanity and pride, they bought Satan's lie and they disobeyed God. The die for all mankind was cast in that one simple bite. Let us see what this produced. Let us go to Genesis 3. This is immediately upon Eve giving Adam the fruit to eat.

Genesis 3:7-13 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

Let us read between the lines a little bit here. I think we can deduct a few things that happened right away. First of all they lost their innocence, and they knew shame and guilt. That is why they hid. They were ashamed and they felt guilty before God. Only the pure can stand before God and not feel guilty. They had been guiltless, but in the presence of His holiness, they had to hide because they were as guilty as sin (pardon the pun), and they knew shame.

The second thing is that they feared God for the wrong reasons. They feared Him because of punishment for sin. They did not fear Him because He is the great God and Creator of all things, our Provider, our Sustainer, and the one who gives wonderful blessings. They feared Him because He had their life in His hands now and He could crush it with a word because they had sinned.

And the third thing is they immediately shifted the blame for their sins. Everybody was pointing the finger. He did it. No, she did it. No, it was the Devil. It was the snake that did it. The fact is that though they bore a great deal of the responsibility, ultimately the blame did lie with Satan the Devil. He was the instigator of the whole thing, but they still bore responsibility. So I think God put this in to lead back to the one who was mostly responsible because He wanted us to see where the instigation for sin begins.

And of course this led to the curses, first upon Satan. God curses the one who is ultimately responsible first as an example, but He does not go easy on the woman or the man either. They get their curses too.

You know what all the curses are: that Satan would be put down and the Messiah would bruise his head, and that means when the head is bruised you cease functioning in any intelligent way, and that is what the end of Satan will be. For the woman, she was made to have pain in her childbearing and always be in contention with her husband. She was told that she would always be on the lower rung of that, unfortunately, because he was stronger.

And for man (the men I should say), the males, they would have to go out and work the ground by the sweat of their brow. They would have to work for everything. No longer could they just pluck the fruit off the trees. No longer would they just be caretakers of a beautiful paradise. They would have to go out and plow and sow and tend and reap, and it would not be easy because sometimes the rain would not fall. Sometimes there would be drought, and then there would be famine. And we would have trouble all our lives until we returned to that very ground as dust.

This sin that they committed was no light thing. It has been affecting the rest of us until now. In this we see that God was made out to be the bad guy. He had to act as judge and pronounce sentence for sin. Do you not think humanity has had that view of God ever since, rather than looking at Him as the wonderful Creator, the Almighty God who raised all this up from nothing, who gives and gives and gives and gives some more, who blesses us with everything, the wonderful, loving Father who wants to invite us into His family and make us His very sons? But Adam and Eve by their sin, and I should not forget Satan and his part in this, forced God to be the bad guy. They forced Him to seem harsh and cruel.

But what did Mr. Armstrong used to say? "God doesn't give one inch with sin." Sin occurred, and by His very character and by His holiness He had to pronounce judgment.

Genesis 3:22-24 Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" [See, God did not want mankind to live forever in this state of sin]; therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the Garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life.

This was the most devastating result of our first parents' sin: being driven from the presence of God, separation from God. Sin causes separation. It causes division, disunity, and discord. They sinned, and they did not seek forgiveness. God would have been willing to give them forgiveness and grant them repentance, but there is no indication in God's Word that they ever even felt a bit of remorse. They pointed fingers. They probably felt sad that they had been cursed, but it does not say they fell on their knees and asked Him for forgiveness. And when God sees an attitude like this, what is the result? Separation.

God has to turn His face away from sin. So there is division between God and man. Let us see this in Isaiah 59:1-2. This is very interesting that right after chapter 58 comes these verses in chapter 59. Chapter 58 is about what? Fasting. We apply it to the Day of Atonement. The end of chapter 58 talks

about how we keep the Sabbath, and it is on Sabbath that we draw close to God. And it is while we fast that we draw close to God. And the Day of Atonement is a fast day that is a Sabbath rest.

Immediately upon the end of that chapter he says

Isaiah 59:1 Behold [Look!], the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

This is an answer to an unwritten question. The question that begins this chapter is, "Where is God? Why hasn't He intervened? Why hasn't He come and saved us from whatever is going on?" This was written at the time of Hezekiah which was about the time that Israel went into captivity and Isaiah was sent as a prophet to Israel, and I am sure people, both Israelites and Jews were saying, "Look, the Assyrians are coming. Where is God's hand in this? Where's God?" And the reply is, "He hasn't gone anywhere. His arm isn't shortened. His ear hasn't grown deaf."

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

He *will* not, not *cannot*. When you say "*will* not" that means He actively decided He *will* not, because of sin.

Now look at Isaiah 58:6. The fast that God has chosen is "To loose the bonds of wickedness." When you draw close to God, that breaks that separation, that wickedness, that sin that clamps on us. That is what we are here today commemorating, or trying to make occur, that we break those bonds of wickedness so that we can be united with God in everything.

Remember what I said? When people go before God and they have sinned, they cannot stand it, and they want to run and hide. There is shame there. But if people come before God and they are clear and they are pure, then there can be fellowship. You are not looking to duck under the closest bed, or jump into a closet, or hide your head under your covers. You want to see the face of God, not have it turned away. When we put our sins away from us we can do that. We can look at God and have fellowship with Him.

Of course, we go through the veil by way of the blood of Jesus Christ, the perfect Man, the one who did not sin, who has opened the way for us. But as long as sin reigns, God turns His back. He will not hear.

God is there. He always will be, but His lack of response suggests a great deal of outstanding sin. On the other hand, if one is contrite and acknowledges that sin, He will help. Let us go to Isaiah 57. Look at verses 15-21. It is kind of interesting that these verses bracket Isaiah 58.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy [transcendentally pure; more than we can ever imagine]: "I dwell in the high and holy place [it is emphasized-holiness], with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

God is willing to do that if the attitude is right and the sins are laid out and confessed.

Isaiah 57:16 "For I will not contend forever [God says], nor will I always be angry [not with one who is contrite]; for the spirit would fail before Me, and the souls which I have made."

You would die before God would turn around if you were not contrite and humble before Him. That is what He is saying. You would just wither into dust before God would turn to you, unless you were contrite and humble before Him.

Isaiah 57:17-18 "For the iniquity of his covetousness I was angry and struck him; I hid and was angry [He hid because of sin], and he went on backsliding in the way of his heart. I have seen his ways, and will heal him [because he is contrite]; I will also lead him, and restore comforts to him and to his mourners."

That is the clue that tells you why He was going to heal, because he and his mourners were humble and contrite before God, and that is why God, even to a backslider, will turn toward him and help him. "Heal" in this sense is in a spiritual sense.

Isaiah 57:19-21 "I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near," says the Lord, "And I will heal him." But [there is always a "but"] the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

Sounds like what He said in Isaiah 59:1-2. He will not hear. In this case He says there will not be peace for the wicked. That is why there is separation. That is why there is discord. That is why there is disunity between God and man. This is how God works, though. The wicked He gives no peace. He calls them tempestuous, volatile, dirty, spouters of filth, and unstable. That is what those things mean. "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." It is not a very pretty picture of the wicked.

He will not give those people the time of day until they begin to feel some remorse and at least try to, or attempt to, repent of sin and begin to overcome it.

On the other hand, if people are contrite and humble, if they mourn before God, if they confess their sins, He will save them. He will heal them. He will redeem them. He will forgive them. And they can cover themselves with the blood of Jesus Christ and, therefore, have access to God once again.

But did you ever notice that forgiveness and repentance does not solve every problem? You have your own life as an example of that. You have been forgiven. You have repented of sin. Have your problems stopped? Have you stopped sinning? I do not think any of us has stopped sinning since the time of our baptism. We still have to battle our human nature.

We still have to resist the evil influences of Satan the Devil. We feel them often, every day. Little temptations to do this or that, that we know is counter to what God would do. Satan is still around, is he not? He is alive and kicking. And we live in his den on the earth. Maybe I should say we live in his prison cell with all the other demons, however many they happen to be.

Have you noticed that God does not forbid Satan to deceive you after your baptism? Find me a verse in the Bible where it says that Satan will not mess with us any more after our baptism. God planned to have us live here among those reprobates.

Let us go to I Thessalonians 3:5. Paul had been away from the Thessalonians for awhile and he was getting anxious about how they were doing as far as their Christian lives were going, whether they were learning. Notice what he says to them,

I Thessalonians 3:5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it [He could not stand it any more. He just had to know], I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.

He was talking to converted Thessalonians at the time, and he was wondering if his preaching had done its job and stuck, or whether Satan had come in and done his evil work. So he is still trying to deceive and tempt God's children, especially God's children. They are the ones that know what is going on. Those are the ones that have been chosen to be part of the family to usurp him on his throne of the earth, along with Jesus Christ.

If there is anybody in this world that he wants to cast in the same mold as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, it is you! He wants to derail our progress toward the Kingdom of God in any way he can. Change the metaphor—he wants to abort our development toward birth into God's family. He is the big abortion doctor, and he would do it if he could. Sometimes, unfortunately, he succeeds.

At other times he succeeds partially in luring one of us into sin, more habitual sin. And what does that do? It causes separation from God again, disunity, discord. God has to turn His back if you are living a life of sin.

So as long as Satan is loose, the opportunities for disunity are very high. Just like in the Garden of Eden, things are OK when it is just us and God. But when the uninvited guest comes, things can get a bit dicey. When Satan sticks his nose where it does not belong, discord may not be far behind. It just depends on the character of the man, you and me.

God is going to be faithful to His character, to His promises. We are the ones no one is quite sure about. We are the ones who have to be strong and resist him in the faith. So we have the Day of Atonement which pictures God getting Satan out of the way. Like I said before, throwing the bum out so that he cannot do this any more. So the bulk of mankind has a greater chance of coming into unity with him.

Let us go to Leviticus 16 and see the Old Testament type of this in the offering that was made on the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 16:5-8 And he [Aaron the high priest] shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. Aaron shall offer the bull [he had mentioned that before] as a sin offering, which is for himself [because the priest has to be sinless], and make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat [the Azazel].

God had to choose here which one was which because men are quite unable to tell the difference. Satan transforms himself into an angel of light as his ministers do, and at this time in this part of God's plan, these men were not really able to tell the difference. They did not have the Spirit to discern the one from the other

Let us go down to verse 20. In the intervening verses it talks about the sacrifice of the goat for the Lord which is a type of Jesus Christ because He is the one whose blood paid for our sins. We have gotten to the Azazel now.

Leviticus 16:20-22 And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins [notice that three times—all the iniquities, all their transgressions, all their sins, every one], putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he [the man] shall release the goat in the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:29-30 "This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month [today], you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord.

What we have here on the Day of Atonement is a day we afflict our souls so that we can please God in our fast and put away those bonds of wickedness, break them. We also have the binding of Satan. We have the goat having all the sins of the house of Israel put on its head and taken away into the wilderness and let go [into] an uninhabited place where in the type Satan has no one to influence.

Satan is an angel. He is not extinguishable and the type here shows that they do not kill the goat, the Azazel. They lead him out where he can no longer be an influence because all the sins of Israel are on the head of that goat. He is responsible and he just has to be put away. That is the type of what we are commemorating today on the Day of Atonement.

Let us go to Romans 16:17-20. This has not happened yet. This is still future. This starts out on a down note, but it ends on a high note.

Romans 16:17-20 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple [pure] concerning evil [have nothing to do with it]. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Division and offense, along with heresy, are signs of Satan at work in the church and we are to learn to avoid the people and their teachings who are Satan's tools in these areas. Paul gives us a few hints on what to look for here. They do not serve God. They serve their own ambitions, their own lusts and

desires. They speak smooth words. What this means is plausible words. They do not have to be right words, but they are plausible. They seem like, "well, that might be right," so they have a tendency to convince people if they do not look into them completely.

And flattering speech, they are ones who hold carrots in front of you. Well we can make this happen. They will make you one of their buddies, do things for you, promise you things, say you are good-looking and your hair is nice, then try to weasel their way in so that they can convince you of something that is not according to the doctrine which you learned. We have to learn to be obedient to God and wait patiently, be wise, be just as wise as Satan is, but from the other angle. Wise as serpents and harmless as doves, and wait patiently because it will happen shortly, that Satan will be crushed under our feet, but it "ain't" happened yet and we are still fighting that fight.

This word *crush* in verse 20 means *humiliate*. It means *subdue*. We saw that in the third chapter of Genesis that Satan would be bruised by the Seed of the woman. Christ's death was the thing that bruised Satan, but this is another illusion to his final banishment when he will be utterly humiliated and subdued. That bruising that occurred at Christ's death was the first step in finally putting Satan totally out of the way.

Satan will be put down and that is prophesied in Revelation 20:1-3. Will this not be a wonderful time when it finally occurs?

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.

I was looking at some commentaries and most people think this angel is Christ Himself, and the reasons they give for that is that no other angel seems to be the match for Satan physically. I say *physically* because when Daniel cried for God's help, it took two angels to finally put Satan down. Gabriel tried to come, but it took Michael and Gabriel both to cause the impasse in the situation to be resolved. So most people think this is Christ Himself as the Angel of the Lord. But who knows? We will have to see when we get there. Another aside here:

Revelation 1:18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.

So commentators have put the key to the bottomless pit together with the keys of Hades and Death. They think this might be Christ. Well, whoever this angel is:

Revelation 20:2-3 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 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.

Can you just image Satan bound and gagged for one thousand years, no longer able to deceive anyone? Have you ever tried to conceive of what it is going to be like without Satan around? We do not know. We have never experienced a time when Satan's broadcasts were not being drummed into our heads all the time.

I kind of get the picture in my mind that as soon as Satan is imprisoned, a great weight is going to be lifted off the minds of people. A great sigh of relief will go up. When that door clangs shut and it is

just cut off and maybe finally we will have peace of mind because the "God of peace," it says, "will shortly crush Satan under our feet."

I hope it is like a door slamming shut and it suddenly lifts and I can think clearly. The fog will be gone. Now this does not mean that sin will disappear altogether. Remember Mr. Armstrong said that it would take a generation or two before the ingrained sinful habits of men and women are finally overcome. And even beyond that, people will sin out of weakness from time to time, I am sure.

But the trend is going to be all uphill, after it has been downhill for six thousand years of mankind's existence. Those that are alive then as physical human beings will still have to battle their human nature, surely, because we are weak. We are made of flesh.

But they will have a fighting chance to conquer it. And with strife gone, there will be peace over the whole earth. And with peace, as James said in James 3:18, the fruits of righteousness can flourish. With Satan out of the way, things will begin to return to the way they were before Adam sinned. The great and overriding cause of sin and thus, separation from God will be gone. He will be put out of the way and healing, like is mentioned there in Isaiah 57, can begin.

Remember in Revelation 22 it talks about the trees that come up and their leaves are for the healing of the nations. A great deal of healing needs to go on in billions of people. Satan's removal will be a great big slice of that. During the millennium nature itself will respond and begin to make the earth like Eden once again—abundant food, docile animals, and a great hindrance will be lifted when the enemy's broadcasts stop, when God yanks his station license and cuts him off the air. Will that not be great?

Let us go to Romans 8. I just want to show you this, nature's relief when this happens.

Romans 8:18-22 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. [That happens just before Satan is bound.] For the creation was subjected to futility [to vanity], not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.

When God ushers us into our inheritance and binds Satan the Devil, the creation will respond because it too will be delivered from bondage. It has been under a bondage of corruption, of decay, of ruin. What causes that? Sin. It says that God subjected it to that in hope.

He subjected us to that in hope as well. Remember I said He put us smack dab in the middle of Satan's prison. He did that in hope of our coming into the glorious liberty that He mentions here, and unfortunately the creation had to come along with us in that and they are going to feel that great relief too. All of creation will rejoice when this happens, when we are glorified and Satan is bound.

This is called another thing in Acts 3:19. Peter uses a different term. Listen to what he connects this with:

Acts 3:19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

Once we get rid of sin and we start being unified with God, times of refreshing can come from God's presence.

Acts 3:20-21 And that He may send Jesus Christ [the second coming], who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

This is what things have been working toward. Trumpets and Atonement go Bang, Bang! Christ returns, He puts down all rebellion, and on that day the sons of God rise to meet Him in the air, whether dead or alive. They become members of God's family changed into spirit and then, just a little while later, Satan is bound and imprisoned for a thousand years so that the millennial rule of Jesus Christ and all His saints can occur in an environment of peace.

And then we have the Feast of Tabernacles. But the Feast of Tabernacles does not occur unless these two things happen. Christ returns and plants His government on the earth and with Him are the firstborn who rule with Him. And, secondly, Satan the Devil is bound, gagged, put in a straitjacket, stuffed down a hole for a thousand years so God can work with humanity and reach atonement with mankind—at-one-ment with God.

What an advantage those people are going to have then, to be able to live and overcome and grow without Satan always on their shoulder whispering evil thoughts into their ears. God says in the prophets that His angels or His people will be there say, Go to the right, or, Go to the left, whichever is the proper way. There will be a voice behind them saying, "This is the way; walk you in it." Not Satan blaring out his obnoxious filth, but God's children saying, "This is the way that leads to eternal life." That is what our descendants, hopefully our children, have to look forward to.

On the other hand, because we have had to fight Satan's influence all our Christian lives, we will receive a so much greater reward than those who come to salvation later. Firstfruits is an awesome reward because we had to do this along with our Savior Jesus Christ. We will rule with Him. You do the same, you get the same reward. We will be kings and priests like He is King and Priest, on the first tier of those who are raised into God's Kingdom, because we have had to fight Satan.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

This is the better resurrection that Paul talks about in Hebrews. The more we must overcome, the greater the reward. Yet, I think every one of us would have just loved to have overcome without Satan around because we know how hard it is. But we will be rewarded for that.

Let us close in Revelation 21. This is when atonement will finally be completely fulfilled. After Satan is loosed for a little season, the rebellion is put down and the Devil is cast into the lake of fire with all his demons. Now look what happens afterward.

Revelation 21:1-2 Now 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. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Now listen to this. This is very interesting. Think of Atonement.

Revelation 20:3-5 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. 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." Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful."

Like I said, this is the ultimate fulfillment of Atonement when all men will be at one with God. God will be with men. It says three times, His tabernacle will be with men, He will dwell with them, and God Himself will be with them. Out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, it says. And then He adds to that assurance by God Himself saying, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." You can take them to the bank. They will happen shortly, as Paul says in Romans 16. May God hasten that day!