

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT SCAPEGOAT

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Churches of God who keep the holy days generally teach that the Day of Atonement pictures the time (yet future) when Satan is to be put away. The purpose of this article is to show that this is an incorrect assumption according to the scriptures and to give another possible meaning of the Day of Atonement scapegoat.

THE BOOK OF ENOCH

The meaning of Azazel as a "desert demon" comes from the book of Enoch that consists of Enoch's apocalyptic interpretation of Lev 16. It is a rather strange book that does not date from the time of Enoch, (Gen 5:4) but rather dates from approximately 100BC. It relates stories of Enoch's travels through the heavens and sheol and the many "secrets" he had learned.

In the book of Enoch, (6:6,8:1,9:6,10:4,13:1,69:2) Azazel was one of the leaders among 200 fallen angels (called Watchers) who before the flood lusted after and had intercourse with earth women. The women subsequently bore giants. The giants ate up everything and also devoured men and each other and the cry against them went up to heaven. The book also documents evil things each of the angels taught men to do. Azazel taught men to make swords, knives, shields, breastplates, the art of working metals - also bracelets, ornaments, the use of antimony (beautifying the eyelids), all kinds of costly stones and all colored tinctures. On account of this teaching there arose much godlessness. So mankind committed fornication, were led astray and became corrupt in all their ways. The whole earth was corrupted through the works taught by Azazel - therefore to him ascribe all sin. The angel Raphael was then commanded to bind Azazel in the wilderness, cover him with rocks and darkness where he shall be preserved for the final judgment and to heal the earth which had been corrupted by the angels.

This apocryphal book is the source of the belief that Azazel is Satan. It embellishes the Biblical account according to the superstitious thinking of the Jews during the intertestamental period. But is this the TRUTH about the Azazel of the Bible?

COMMENTS ON A CHURCH BOOKLET

I read a 1974 Church of God booklet that quoted correctly the scripture about proving all things, but then the only proof that was presented concerning the identity of the scapegoat was two quotes from commentaries. "The Comprehensive Commentary says: Spencer, after the oldest OPINIONS of the Hebrews and Christians THINKS Azazel is the name of the devil" and "One Volume Commentary says: Azazel is UNDERSTOOD to be the name of one of those malignant demons". I don't believe opinions and assumptions - even old ones - constitute proof!

I did agree with the booklet in the view that the uninhabited wilderness to which the live goat was driven cannot represent Heaven where Christ went because Heaven is neither uninhabited nor a wilderness.

I also agreed with the view that the live goat could not represent the work of the resurrected Christ (to go to Heaven to be accepted by God the Father) because when the first goat was killed, this work was performed by the officiating high priest who then took the blood of the goat within the veil to the mercy seat (symbolizing the throne of God in Heaven). It was not performed by the live goat taking the blood out to the wilderness. But just because the live goat could not represent this work of Christ does not mean that the only alternative is that he must represent Satan. There is no proof here.

Having already assumed (without proof) that the scapegoat represents Satan, claims are then made in the booklet that the reason the sins were confessed over the live goat and placed on him is that Satan is the author and instigator of the sins. **THIS IS AN ASSUMPTION, NOT A FACT.** There is **NO SUCH STATEMENT** in the Bible that Azazel was either the author of, responsible for the sins or had instigated them. The Bible **ONLY SAYS**, "The sins **OF THE PEOPLE** were put on his head." (Lev. 16:21) To impute evil motives to this act is **UNBIBLICAL** and certainly **UNCHRISTIAN**. One of the rules of Bible study, as I always heard it preached, is that we must ask, "What does the Bible **SAY**, and what does it **NOT SAY**?"

Another supposed proof that the scapegoat represents Satan has to do with time sequence. It is said that the holy days picture the plan of God, and that the Feast of Trumpets pictures the return of Jesus Christ. (Rev 11:15) Soon after the Feast of Trumpets in time sequence is the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month. The next important event after Christ returns is that Satan is shut up into the bottomless pit. (Rev 20:2) The statement is made in the booklet, "Notice that the act of sending away the live goat does not take place until **AFTER** the high priest **RETURNS** from taking the blood of the slain goat into the Holy of Holies. This is an analogy of the sending away of Satan **AFTER** Christ returns." However, remember that Christ **DID RETURN** after being accepted in Heaven to spend an additional 40 days with his disciples. Therefore sending the scapegoat **COULD** take place **BEFORE** the second coming of Christ and represent someone other than Satan.

If the theory of time sequence is correct, it is indeed possible that the scapegoat could represent Satan. But should time sequence be looked upon as absolute proof? Consider this... Since part of the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement, the slaying of the first goat, actually took place **BEFORE** the day of Trumpets - and before Christ's return - on Passover, (not according to a time sequence) how do we **KNOW** that the sending away of the scapegoat **MUST** take place **AFTER** Trumpets - after Christ's return **IN** time sequence? Answer - We don't know for sure! And, wouldn't relying on time sequence rather than proof of guilt to determine identity be the same as judging according to outward appearance?

Another statement from the booklet is, "Notice too, that after laying both his hands on the live goat, Aaron had to wash and cleanse himself before coming in contact with the people. So too, the fit man also had to wash his clothes and bathe himself after coming in contact with the Azazel goat before he came into the presence of the people. The symbolism is certainly that of having come in contact with the devil." This sounds very convincing, but Lev. 16:27-28 states that the man that carries forth the **SLAIN** goat out of the camp and burns it has to wash his clothes and bathe himself before he can come into the camp also. So if you follow this logic, the

slain goat must represent Satan too! Yet we are sure he represents Christ! This is what you call circumstantial evidence and judging according to outward appearance! Azazel was thrust out into the desolate wilderness! People had to wash after coming in contact with him! Therefore he MUST be evil - right? But there is NO PROOF that he DID any evil, and this is the whole crux of the situation!

SOME PIECES JUST DO NOT SEEM TO FIT...

- * The bottomless pit to which Satan is sent does not exactly correspond to the wilderness to which the goat is sent, but is a close enough analogy so that people have accepted it without much question.
- * The goat is sent carrying the people's sins away. When he is gone all their sins are removed. But there is no mention in Revelation of Satan's carrying the peoples' sins into the bottomless pit. The reason he is sent there, the Bible says, is that he 'should deceive the nations no more' which is his OWN sin. He carries only his own sins into the pit in order to be prevented from practicing them during the millennium.
- * The analogy is often drawn about the scapegoat that we will not be at-one with God until all sin has been removed. But does this apply to Satan? At the time Satan shall be removed on the Day of Atonement we shall have been already resurrected into the Kingdom at the Feast of Trumpets and therefore we shall ALREADY be at-one with God!
- * Satan is not sent to the pit permanently as the goat is sent away permanently, but is released for a time after the thousand years and allowed to deceive again.
- * According to Joel 2:1,12,15 Trumpets and the fasting of Atonement are holy days given to PREPARE us for the Day of the Lord, but we most often picture them as the return of the Lord and the putting away of Satan, an event which FOLLOWS the Day of the Lord. Could we be MISSING the point of these holy days?

THE NAME AZAZEL

Does azazel mean 'scapegoat'?

The name "scapegoat" is not a translation of the word azazel, but an interpretation of the meaning by the translators. The English word 'scapegoat' signifies one who bears blame and guilt for others. So, although the word 'scapegoat' is not in the original Bible text, it does accurately and exactly convey as an English term what the Bible says - that the goat had the sins of the congregation placed on his head.

Does azazel mean impudent or harden?

At first glance there appears to be a similarity between the word zâ'zêl (Strong's #5799) and âzaz (Strong's #5810) which means impudent or harden. However, look closer at Strong's #5799 zâ'zêl Notice the Hebrew letters. Under the ayin, the vowel point is called the sheva pattach giving the a sound as in hat. The word is pronounced az-aw-zale. This is different from the #5810 âzaz which is defined as 'impudent or harden'. #5810 has the gametz vowel point under

the ayin giving the a sound as in all; and the word is pronounced aw-zaz, the exact opposite pronunciation of #5799. Therefore, it is not likely that azazel means impudent or harden.

Does azazel mean 'strength of God'?

I thought at first that with the 'el' attached to 'azaz', the word meant 'strength of God'. In #5812 the proper name Azaz with the very same vowel point as #5799 has to do with strength. Jah refers to the Lord. Other proper names listed with similar spelling and similar meaning are #5815 Aziy'el - strengthened of God, and #5832 Azar'el - God has helped. However, as some Hebrew-expert friends told me, the word is three syllables `a-za'-zel, not a-zaz-el. The word is spelled a'zAzEl (i.e. ayin-hatef patakh-zayin-qamaec- alef-zayin-sere-lamed). The consonants are: (ayin-zayin- alef-zayin-lamed). It is almost certainly unrelated to either 'strong' or 'God'. Thus, 'impudent' is wrong because of the alef between zayin and zayin. However, 'strength of God' is also wrong because of the lack of an alef between the second zayin and lamed.

Is azazel a female goat?

The definition in Strong's for azazel says, "from 5795 and 235; goat of departure; the scapegoat". #5795 is the word `eZ which is defined as "a she-goat" and definitely used for a she-goat in Lev 4:28 and Pr. 27:27. However, the word used for goat (for both goats) in Lev. 16 is Strong's #8163, Sa`YR shaggy, a he-goat. So which is it, a male or a female? Why this discrepancy? I asked the folks on B-Hebrew, the internet discussion forum for Hebrew experts. I was told that gender in Hebrew is conveyed in a variety of ways, but pertinent to `eZ, it is conveyed by the plural form, or an ending in singular. So... ez = (male/ sometimes generic goat). ezah = (female goat). ez - zim = (male/sometimes generic goats) ezoth = (female goats). The female form could be in Lev 4:28 and Pr 27:27. Also, `eZ seems to be the more generic term for "goat," and Sa`YR (which means "hairy") is the more specific name for male goat. The bulk of the evidence, therefore, suggests that the goat is male.

Does azazel mean a 'desert demon'?

The apocryphal book of Enoch, as previously discussed, was written during the intertestamental period, showing the Jews' thinking of that time on this subject. But these superstitious beliefs about azazel are undoubtedly much older. Perhaps the original way azazel got the meaning of a demon was by confusing `eZ with Sa`YR. Sa`YR is the Hebrew word for goat and the root from which we get "satyr," and it probably refers to some kind of hairy, goat-god which Israel worshiped in Lev.17:7 (from Young's Literal Translation) "and they sacrifice not any more their sacrifices to *goats* after which they are going a whoring; a statute age-during is this to them, to their generations." (The word goats here is also translated goats in Greens Interlinear, but devils in the KJV) Also 2 Chron. 11:15. "and he (Rehoboam) establisheth to him priests for high places, and for *goats*, and for calves, that he made" Remember the calf that Israel made when they came out of Egypt? Perhaps they were also superimposing some sort of ancient goat-worship onto the Lord's sacrifice of the Day of Atonement.

Does the goat go -TO- Azazel?

Some quote Lev 16:8 from the NRSV which says, "and Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord and the other lot 'FOR' Aza'zel. Then verse 10 which says, "but the goat on which the lot fell for Aza'zel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness 'TO' Aza'zel." Also verse 26 which says, "And he

who lets the goat go 'TO' Aza'zel shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp." They say that since in verse 8 the goat is selected 'FOR' Azazel, and then the goat is sent 'TO' Azazel, this shows that Azazel must be a demon. However, the NRSV has mistranslated these verses. Notice the same verses in Strong's Literal Translation: 8 "And Aaron hath given lots over the two goats, one lot for Jehovah, and one lot for a goat of departure"; 10 "And the goat on which the lot for a goat of departure hath gone up is caused to stand living before Jehovah to make atonement by it, to send it away for a goat of departure into the wilderness." 26 "And he who is sending away the goat for a goat of departure doth wash his garments, and hath bathed his flesh with water, and afterwards he cometh in unto the camp." The KJV renders these words, "for a scapegoat". So there is no indication in the Hebrew text that the goat is sent -TO- Azazel, only that 'a goat of departure' is sent -TO- the wilderness. Also if the goat's name IS Azazel (meaning a goat that departs), how can it be sent -TO- Azazel (meaning a goat that departs)? This does not make sense.

Is azazel a proper name?

In English we recognize proper names by having capital letters, but it is more difficult in Hebrew to know that a word is a proper name. In Hebrew proper names are often "squished" (missing letters). Compound words, such as Yehoshua (Joshua) "The Lord saves", don't make sense in the context otherwise. Notice words such as Abimelech, "my father is king" or are "beheaded" (this is cutting of nouns that normally go with a word. i.e. We don't say "the state of Florida" just Florida.) The problem is that in many languages, names have other meanings. A name means nothing in English except a name, but in other languages, including Hebrew, they are compound words. So compound words in Hebrew are most often proper names. However, there is a problem in seeing azazel as a proper name.

Notice how we perceive the three scriptures where Azazel is used when we translate it as a proper name.

Lev 16:8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for Azazel.

Lev 16:10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be Azazel, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for Azazel into the wilderness.

Lev 16:26 And he that let go the goat for Azazel shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water and afterward come into the camp.

Now notice the difference when we read these verses from Strong's Literal Translation...

Lev 16:8 And Aaron hath given lots over the two goats, one lot for Jehovah, and one lot for a goat of departure

Lev 16:10 And the goat on which the lot for a goat of departure hath gone up is caused to stand living before Jehovah to make atonement by it, to send it away for a goat of departure into the wilderness.

Lev 16:26 And he who is sending away the goat for a goat of departure doth wash his garments, and hath bathed his flesh with water, and afterwards he cometh in unto the camp.

You see that when azazel is translated as a proper name, we might get the wrong idea in verse 8 that azazel is someone other than the goat itself. This misunderstanding is not corrected until verse 10 where it says the goat is 'to BE azazel'. Also, when it is translated as a proper name, the meaning of the word is lost so that the imputing of wrong meanings is more likely to occur such as the desert-demon idea or that azazel is a name for Satan. However, use of the literal translation leaves no doubt as to the meaning and intent of the words. In this case, the use of the literal compound words makes more sense and gives a more accurate understanding in the context than the use of a proper name.

What does the name actually mean?

The word azazel occurs only four times in the Old Testament, all of which occur in Lev 16 (v.8, 9,10, 26). It is a combination of two words, `ez, meaning "goat," and 'uzel, meaning "to go away." It is simply the "goat that goes away" taking the sins of the Israelites upon it into the wilderness. In Greens Interlinear azazel is translated 'complete removal'. In Strong's, #5799, azazel is defined, 'the goat of departure'. The understanding of azazel meaning 'the goat that goes away or departs' is most accurate and is also supported by the LXX. I heard in a tape sermon that this indicates departure from God's control. This is possible, but not provable by scripture since the goat did not depart according to its own will, but was forcibly sent away. (Lev. 16:21)

So the conclusion is that there is no proof whatsoever of an evil name in the Hebrew. But even if there were definite proof of an evil name, would it be JUST to condemn a MAN on the grounds of the meaning of his name??? Doesn't this goat represent a MAN? Yes, it does! We know this because the first goat represents Jesus Christ. So just how important is it to God that we establish proper judgment concerning the scapegoat? *"He that justifies the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are ABOMINATION to the Lord."* (Pr. 17:15) This is how important it is to God, brethren. Have we, the entire nation of God's people, been guilty of condemning an innocent person by teaching and believing that the scapegoat represents Satan?

A SIMILAR SACRIFICE

It is interesting that the sacrifice required for the cleansing of infected houses (Remember that Israel is referred to as the 'house' of Israel, and the Church is called a spiritual 'house' in Heb. 3:6.) and lepers is very similar to the Day of Atonement sacrifice. Read Lev. 14:4-7,49-53. One bird is slain and one is sent out into the open field. Notice in verse 4 that both birds are clean. Could Satan represent a clean bird - or a goat which is a clean animal? What are the animals which Satan is said to represent in the Bible? Are they clean? Also notice here that the living bird is dipped in the blood of the slain bird. Therefore, in this situation at least, the live bird which is sent away COULD NOT be evil because the blood of the slain bird (symbolic of Christ) is applied to it. Although it does not specifically say in Lev. 16 that the living GOAT is dipped in the blood of the one who is slain, it does say that the sacrifice of the slain goat is for the cleansing of the entire congregation and that would include the live goat who was taken from the congregation. (Lev 16:5)

OTHER COMPATIBLE ANALOGIES

The main reason for the belief that the Azazel goat represents Satan is the analogy between the casting out of that goat and the future banishment of Satan. And there are analogies that do show this meaning. For example, the slain goat could represent Abel and the live one Cain who was then sent out into the wilderness. (This is not a perfect analogy, however, since the one goat does not slay the other goat.) There are also other such analogies which show an entirely different meaning, yet are also possible and scripturally compatible.

1. Gen. 37:31 The one goat was killed and its blood put on the coat of Joseph. The other goat (JOSEPH) was sent away by his brothers into Egypt.

2. The one goat was killed at the Passover in Egypt which represents Christ. The other goat (THE ENTIRE NATION OF ISRAEL) was sent out into the wilderness.

3. 1 Sam. 19:13 The one goat was killed which was made into the pillow on David's bed. The other goat (DAVID) was forced to flee that day from his house and from Saul and went further and further into the wilderness.

4. The one goat was slain - Christ, when he was baptized in the River Jordan (type of death). The other goat departed into the wilderness. The holy spirit drove him (CHRIST) immediately into the wilderness.

5. Remember how the mother of the two sons of Zebedee came to Jesus and asked him, "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, the other on thy left in thy kingdom." Jesus said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" Jesus then promised them that they would indeed die in like manner as he did. Now, how did they die??? Acts 12:2 says that James was killed by a sword (just as Jesus was). John, however, was sent into exile to the Isle of Patmos. THE ONE GOAT WAS KILLED AND THE OTHER WAS SENT AWAY.

6. When Jesus Christ was killed on the Passover, he saved his disciples from their bondage in Judaism which is a type of the bondage in Egypt (See Rev 11:8) and sent them forth into all the world saying in Mt.28: "Go ye therefore and teach all nations", And the disciples waited in Jerusalem until they received the holy spirit which gave them POWER to become his witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8) So the one goat, Jesus Christ, was killed, and the other goat, THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH, was sent out into all the world.

7. Finally, the analogy is shown in Rev. 12:5-6 concerning the woman who brought forth the man child who was killed and caught up unto God in heaven. She then fled INTO THE WILDERNESS where she has a place prepared of God. So Jesus was killed and the woman fled into the wilderness.

A PROPHECY ABOUT THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

If we read Lev. 19, we see that the purpose for the sacrifice of these two goats was the "cleansing" of the congregation or sanctuary, that the Lord might make an atonement for us for all our transgressions. "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you to CLEANSE you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord...and he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary." (Lev. 16:30-33)

There is a prophecy concerning the "cleansing of the sanctuary" in the book of Daniel...

Dan 8:8 Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken, and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven

Dan 8:9 And out of one of them came forth a little horn which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.

Dan 8:10 And it waxed great even to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground and stamped upon them.

Dan 8:11 Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down.

Dan 8:12 And a host was given him against the daily sacrifice and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practiced and prospered.

Dan 8:13 Then I heard one saint speaking and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden under foot?

Dan 8:14 And he said unto me. Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

Verse 14 gives us the period of 2300 days. The end of these days marks the arrival of the little horn who comes from one of the four divisions of the Greek Empire (verses 9-12). And takes away the daily sacrifice. Also at this time the sanctuary will be 'cleansed'. There have been many interpretations of this prophecy. My theory is contained in the Bible study called, *The Little Horn of the Third Beast and the 2300 Days*.

CONCLUSION

In Lev. 16:5 the two goats offered on the Day of Atonement are taken from the congregation of the children of Israel. Both of these goats were presented as an offering to God, but each was offered in a different manner. Lev. 16:9 says that the goat that is slain is a sin offering but verse 5 shows that BOTH the slain goat and the live goat are A SIN OFFERING. Could Satan be considered as a sacrifice or offering acceptable to God, a SIN OFFERING? No, he could not.

We already know that the goat upon whom the Lord's lot fell represents Jesus Christ. The scapegoat is to "bear" or "lift" or "carry away" the sins of the congregation BY A SEPARATION FROM THE CONGREGATION. The sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, rather than picturing the putting away of Satan, could picture the fact that there are two penalties for sin depending on the type of sin. One penalty is death, and the other is separation from the congregation. Christ paid both penalties. This is the reason there are two goats. Jesus could be considered both the sacrificial lamb (or goat) as well as the scapegoat because he is the 'lamb of God' who 'takes away' the sins of the world (John 1:29, 36)

This dual sacrifice could also show how we might be participants in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. (See numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 above) His sacrifice took place outside the camp, so we are to follow him without the camp bearing his reproach. (Heb. 13:11-13) This scripture could be telling us that the identity of the scapegoat, rather than picturing Satan, is actually someone following Jesus without the camp bearing his reproach.

The most important consideration having to do with the identity of the scapegoat is **RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT** - because this is not just a GOAT, but a MAN, and not just a MAN, but a BROTHER since both goats were taken from the congregation! If we cast out a brother's name as evil and believe it and preach it without proof that he deserves an evil name, then wouldn't we be a nation of **UNJUST JUDGES** who have accepted heresay evidence and judge according to outward appearance? As Jesus said to the Pharisees who were condemning him, "If you had known what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, you would not have condemned the guiltless." To apply this **MERCY** to the **SACRIFICE** of the Day of Atonement is to give this man or any man who is accused the benefit of the doubt that he is **NOT GUILTY** until there is proof to convict him. If this kind of justice had prevailed at the trial of the first goat - Jesus Christ, he would not have been slain would he? Whoever azazel is, then, I say, just as Pilate said of Jesus:

I FIND NO FAULT IN HIM