

Azazel, the Fit Man, and the Angel

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The terms “Azazel” (SHD 5799), “fit man” (SHD 6261), and the phrase “a land not inhabited” (SHD 1509), are used in only one section of scripture and they all happen to be dealing with the same event. This could be viewed as a coincidence, but it warrants further investigation to see whether there is a prophetic connection between these events that took place during the time of Moses and a future scenario.

The Biblical context, in which all three words and phrases were used, is describing activities associated with the Day of Atonement (see study: Atonement, Day of Covering). On this Holy Day, ancient Israel was to present two goats at the door of the tabernacle of meeting (Lev. 16:7). The High Priest then cast lots to determine which goat would represent “the Lord” and which goat would picture a “complete removal” (SHD 5799, Azazel) from the people of Israel (Lev. 16:8). The goat that represented “the Lord” was then sacrificed as a sin offering,

And Aaron (the High Priest) shall bring the goat on which the Lord’s lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering (Lev. 16:9; NKJV used throughout unless noted; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Any clean animal that was offered for the sin of an individual, or the sins of the nation, had to be without visible spot or blemish,

If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the Lord for his sin which he has sinned a young bull **without blemish** as a sin offering (Lev. 4:3; cf. 4:23, 28, 32; 5:15; 9:2-3; emphasis added).

Any animal with a spot or blemish could not be used as a sin offering because these physical defects, however minor they may be, symbolized sin itself. Therefore, a sin offering had to be, figuratively speaking, without sin (spot or blemish) because it was to represent the sinless spirit-being whose death would cover the sins of the world as well as fulfilling the animal sacrificial system (Jn. 1:29),

Do not presume that I (Jesus Christ) **came to tear down the law or the Prophets; I came not to tear down, but to fill up** (Mt. 5:17; RNT; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies (sets apart) for the purifying (cleansing) of the flesh, ¹⁴how much more shall the blood of **Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit **offered himself without spot** (blemish) to God... (Heb. 9:13-14a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

With this in mind, it is reasonable to conclude that the goat which was not chosen by God to be the sin offering must have had some blemish that was humanly impossible to detect. There does not appear to be any other reasonable explanation why God would reject this goat as the sin offering. This explains why God was involved in the selection process. There is no other example in scripture where God determined which animal was an acceptable sacrifice for sin. In all other cases, the decision, regarding whether

an animal was suitable or not, was made by the Levitical priest. The spiritual lesson is that only God can read the hearts of individuals and know their sins which are not outwardly visible. As these two goats symbolized two beings in the spirit-realm, only God could know which one would be a suitable sacrifice for sin and which would not,

But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his (Saul's) appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused (rejected) him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart (1Sam. 16:7; cf. 1Kgs. 8:39; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Since God chose the goat for the sin offering, which was done through the casting of lots, He also determined which goat figuratively had a spiritual defect and commanded this one to be sent away,

But the goat upon which the lot fell, it shall be presented for Azazel (SHD 5799 – entire removal), before the face of YHVH, to make atonement (covering for sin) for him, to send him away into the wilderness to Azazel (Lev. 16:10; RHS; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The goat that God chose for a sin offering not only symbolically covered the sins of the nation of Israel, its shed blood also covered the sins of Azazel, which is explained in Leviticus 16:10. Therefore, the goat that was sent away represented a spirit-being that had sinned, and yet could repent and be forgiven at a future date because the blood of Christ would apply to him as well (cf. 2Sam. 14:14; Ac. 10:34; 2Pet. 3:9). According to the next scripture the spirit-being, represented by the goat that was sent into the wilderness, not only sinned but he was also responsible for influencing an entire nation to sin,

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, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness (SHD 1509 – a land not inhabited, a separate place) by the hand of a suitable (SHD 6261 – fit) man. ²²The goat shall bear (carry) on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabitable land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness (Lev. 16:21-22; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Some people believe the goat that was released in the wilderness represented Jesus Christ, but this cannot be true because Jesus Christ died in order to cover our sins. He did not carry the sins of the world with him. The only way in which Christ "became sin" (2Cor. 5:21) was by his birth as a human being because all who are flesh and blood are in this mortal/physical form due to Adam and Eve's sin (see studies: Symbolism). Therefore, our flesh and blood bodies are a constant reminder of sin and the death that follows. Our only hope is that Jesus Christ's death will cover our sins so that we may be counted worthy of everlasting life,

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and he said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' (Jn. 1:29).

Also, a fit man had to physically remove the goat that was not a suitable sacrifice for sin. In sharp contrast, Jesus Christ was not removed by anyone. Instead, he chose to lay his life down as a sacrifice for sin (Jn. 10:15, 18; 15:13).

Earlier in this study it was mentioned that there may be a prophetic connection between Azazel, the fit man, and an angel. There is such an example in the book of Revelation where a spirit-being is pictured as being forcibly removed. In Revelation 20:1-3, the spirit-being is Satan and instead of a fit man (anti-type) it is an angel (type) that removes Satan,

Then I (John) saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³and 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 (Rev. 20:1-3; Ed. note in parenthesis).

So just as Azazel was removed into the wilderness, symbolically representing the fact that he would not be able to influence the nation of Israel to sin, Satan will be removed by an angel as mentioned in Revelation 20:1-3. When this happens, he cannot influence anyone for a period of time during the millennium. Hence the connection between Azazel, the fit man, and the angel, which all point to the fulfillment of various symbols associated with the Day of Atonement. Through this symbolism that is unique to the Day of Atonement, it should be evident that the goat sent into the wilderness does not represent the work of Jesus Christ. Instead, it represents the work of Satan while holding out the possibility that he might repent. If this were to happen, he would be forgiven because Christ's sacrifice covers all sins (cf. Leviticus 16:10; Jn. 1:29; Ac. 10:34; 2Pt. 3:9). These sins have had a very negative impact upon the angelic host of heaven as well as mankind (Rev. 12:4-9). This is why God's people are to afflict their souls or fast (Lev. 16:29, 31; 23:27, 32; Nu. 29:7, see study: Atonement, Day of Covering) on the Day of Atonement. It is an annual reminder that the ways of Satan bring about physical as well as spiritual affliction upon mankind. The suffering of mankind under Satan's system of governing this world should be evident to anyone who examines the wars and destructive history of mankind. This is why Jesus Christ has to return and deal with Satan and those who follow him. True peace will never occur until the events pictured by the Day of Atonement are fulfilled.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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