

# Atonement - The Day of Covering

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Almighty God, the Creator of the heavens and earth, demonstrates His love for mankind through the Biblical plan of deliverance from sin and death. The Day of Atonement is a very important part of this plan. By observing it we come to understand why God has ordained this Holy time and how it pertains to those who have broken His divine law and commandments.

The Day of Atonement falls on the tenth day of the seventh month in God's Calendar (See the documents on this website under: God's Holy Days). On this day God's servants are instructed from scripture to fast, abstain from all work, and observe it as a holy convocation. It is a Sabbath day. If anyone does any work on this day, they will be cut off from God's people,

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>27</sup> "On exactly the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you, and you shall humble your souls and present an offering by fire to the LORD. <sup>28</sup> "You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God. <sup>29</sup> "If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people. <sup>30</sup> "As for any person who does any work on this same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. <sup>31</sup> "You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. <sup>32</sup> "It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath" (Lev. 23:26-32; NASB throughout unless noted).

It is evident from this sequence in Leviticus that the Day of Atonement is of great importance and must be properly understood so that it can be kept as God intends. By doing so, it becomes possible to learn what God is accomplishing.

In this study we will examine this Holy Day and seek the correct Biblical understanding of its meaning and significance, and in the process, answer the following four questions,

- 1) What is the origin of the word Atonement?
- 2) What does the word Atonement mean?
- 3) Why is there a need for Atonement?
- 4) What is the process of Atonement?

We will address the first two questions with an examination of the origin and meaning of the English word *atonement*.

Etymology is the study of the origin and history of words. As languages evolve and transform over time, specific words may develop from unusual or unexpected sources. Such is the case with the English word *atonement*,

The word *atonement* gained widespread use in the sixteenth century after William Tyndale recognized that there was not a direct translation of the concept into English. In order to explain the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice, which accomplished both the remission of sin and reconciliation of man to God, Tyndale invented a word that would encompass both actions. He wanted to overcome the inherent limitations of the word "reconciliation" while incorporating the aspects of "propitiation" and forgiveness. It is interesting to note that while Tyndale labored to translate the 1526 English Bible, his proposed word comprises two parts, 'at' and 'onement,' which also means reconciliation, but combines it with something more. Although one thinks of the Jewish Fast of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the Hebrew word is 'kaper' meaning 'a covering', so one can see that 'reconciliation' doesn't precisely contain all the necessary components of the word atonement. Expiation means "to atone for." Reconciliation comes from Latin roots re, meaning "again"; con, meaning "with"; and ultimately, 'sol', a root meaning "seat". Reconciliation, therefore, literally means "to sit again with."

While this meaning may appear sufficient, Tyndale thought that if translated as "reconciliation," there would be a pervasive misunderstanding of the word's deeper significance to not just reconcile, but "to cover," so the word was invented.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>

References:

1. ^ The Archbishop of Canterbury: William Tyndale; Reformer and Rebel. A Quincentenary Appreciation. Lambeth Palace, 5th October 1994 <sup>[1]</sup>
2. ^ Online Etymology Dictionary, Yom Kippur, 2001 <sup>[2]</sup>
3. ^ David Rolph Seely, PhD. "Words 'Fityly Spoken': Tyndale's English Translation of the Bible." <sup>[3]</sup>  
(From: <http://atonement.askdefine.com/>)

The word atonement was invented by William Tyndale the Archbishop of Canterbury. As the records indicate, it was coined while translating the Bible into English in an effort to provide a word which encompassed several concepts related to Christ's sacrifice.

Various churches teach that the meaning of atonement can be understood in the pronunciation of the word as At-one-ment. In other words, this day is about mankind being reconciled to God and thus becoming *one with Him* through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. However, this explanation is not sufficient as we will see.

The definition of the English word *atonement*,

1. Amends or reparation made for an injury or wrong; expiation.
2.
  - a. Reconciliation or an instance of reconciliation between God and humans.
  - b. **Atonement** *Christianity* The reconciliation of God and humans brought about by the redemptive life and death of Jesus.

The definition of *atone* is,

To make amends, as for a sin or fault.  
To expiate.  
To conciliate; appease.  
To reconcile or harmonize.

(From: Free Online Dictionary)

The Hebrew word translated *atonement* in English, or in some cases *reconciliation*, carries a somewhat different meaning. The first place the word *atonement* appears in the Bible is in Genesis as part of the instruction Noah received from God concerning the ark,

Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall **cover**<sup>3722</sup> it inside and out with **pitch**<sup>3724</sup> (Gen. 6:14; KJV; emphasis added)

The words *cover* and *pitch* come from two Hebrew words which share the same origin and are similar in both spelling and meaning. In order to better understand the definitions of these words and the concepts related to them, we must go directly to the Hebrew language. The Hebrew word which Tyndale decided to render *atonement* in English is SHD 3722 *kaphar*. This is the word rendered *cover* in Gen. 6:14 which we just read.

The following definition is from Strong's Hebrew Dictionary,

SHD 3722 [*kaphar* /kaw·far/] 1 to cover, purge, make an atonement, make reconciliation, cover over with pitch. 1A to coat or cover with pitch. 1B to cover over, pacify, propitiate, atone for sin, make atonement for. Atone for sin and persons by legal rites.

The Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon includes the following information on the word *kaphar*:

orig. meaning dubious, but perhaps *cover*, cf. Arabic (*kafara*) *cover, hide*; >W. Robertson Smith, who thinks of Aramaic (*kar*) *wash away, rub off*; also Assyrian *kuppuru, purify* (and deriv. *takpirtu*) Arabic (*kaffāratun*) *an expiation*.

The other word *pitch* from Gen. 6:14 is:

SHD 3724 *kopher*. From 3722 (*kaphar*); the price of a life, a ransom; Ex 21:30; Is 43:3; 49:8;— **1.** *a price for ransom of a life* Jb 33:24; 36:18; Ex 21:30; Pr 13:8 *ransom for* Pr 6:35; 21:18 Nu 35:31, 32; *his ransom* 49:8); *thy ransom* Is 43:3; alone 1 S 12:3 Am 5:12. **2.** in Ex 30:12 is a half shekel of the sanctuary paid by each male above twenty years at the census in order that there might be no plague upon them. It was offered to Yahweh, *to atone for them*.

Strong's secondary meaning of *kopher* is: asphalt, pitch (as a covering).

Another closely related word is SHD 3725 *kippur* (from 3722: atonement). *Kippur* is the Hebrew word found in the Judaic version of this Holy Day. It is referred to as Yom (day of) Kippur.

In spite of the fact that the origins and definitions of *kaphar* and the other Hebrew words associated with atonement such as *kopher* and *kippur* are considered to be somewhat uncertain, the evidence examined here points to the rudimentary meaning; to cover, to cover over, hide; and, in the case of *kopher*, a ransom, the price required to cover one held captive in order to gain their release.

In the following section we will examine several examples in the Bible where the Hebrew word *kaphar* appears,

When He killed them, then they sought Him, and returned and searched diligently for God;<sup>35</sup> and they remembered that God was their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer.<sup>36</sup> But they deceived Him with their mouth and lied to Him with their tongue.<sup>37</sup> For their heart was not steadfast toward Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant.<sup>38</sup> But He, being compassionate, forgave (***kaphar***) their iniquity and did not destroy *them*; and often He restrained His anger and did not arouse all His wrath.<sup>39</sup> Thus He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and does not return (Ps. 78:34-39).

In this scripture we see the concept of the covering of sin as an act of God's compassion, forgiving the Israelites so that they would not be put to death on account of their iniquity.

In the book of Deuteronomy God provides instructions to the priests and elders of Israel for dealing with an unsolved murder. After the completion of these instructions, the elders of the nearest city to the crime will ask God,

Forgive (***kaphar***) Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, O LORD, and do not place the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of Your people Israel.' And the bloodguiltiness shall be forgiven them (Deut. 21:8).

God's forgiveness of Israel's blood guiltiness is the result of providing a covering for sin. It speaks of Israel as, "whom he has redeemed." The forgiveness or covering (*kaphar*) that removes blood guiltiness is an appropriate sacrifice that is acceptable to God. The covering that God provided as an appropriate sacrifice was the being who became Jesus Christ. He paid the price required for

Israel (all people who join themselves to God; cf. Rom. 11:17-24) to be redeemed and now God is asked in this prayer in Deuteronomy to cover, or atone for them.

In Exodus 30 we read the command, as it was given to Israel and her priests, concerning the Day of Atonement or Covering,

You shall not offer any strange incense on this altar, or burnt offering or meal offering; and you shall not pour out a drink offering on it. <sup>10</sup> "Aaron shall make atonement (3722 *kaphar*) on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement (3725 *kippurum*) on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement (3725 *kippur*) once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD." <sup>11</sup> The LORD also spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>12</sup> "When you take a census of the sons of Israel to number them, then each one of them shall give a ransom (3724 *kopher*) for himself (soul or life) to the LORD, when you number them, so that there will be no plague among them when you number them. <sup>13</sup> "This is what everyone who is numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), half a shekel as a contribution (heave offering) to the LORD. <sup>14</sup> "Everyone who is numbered, from twenty years old and over, shall give the contribution (heave offering) to the LORD. <sup>15</sup> "The rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less than the half shekel, when you give the contribution (heave offering) to the LORD to make atonement (3722 *kaphar*) for yourselves (one's life). <sup>16</sup> "You shall take the atonement (3725 *kippur*) money from the sons of Israel and shall give it for the service of the tent of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement (3722 *kaphar*) for yourselves (one's life) (Ex. 30:9-16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Aaron the High Priest was to make atonement (a covering for sin) on the horns of the altar with the blood of the sin offering once a year, throughout Israel's generations; it is most holy to the Lord. In addition to this, when the Israelites were numbered, each Israelite age twenty and up was to give a ransom (SHD 3724 *kopher*; price of release for someone held captive, i.e. a ransom), for their lives so that there would be no plague among them when they were numbered. This ransom was a half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; it is a heave offering to the Lord. No one is to pay any more or any less.

The tent of meeting was the first tabernacle in the wilderness. It held the Ark of the Covenant and was the first temple system in which the priests served God. The symbolic and prophetic meaning here is that the yearly sin offering pointed to the future sacrifice of Christ. The High Priest was a type of Messiah. The ransom money was a type of the price required to redeem one from sin and death. The Israelite had to pay this ransom for their lives. It went to the priests (who also represented Christ in their functions during the first covenant period) who served God in the temple on a daily basis as mediators for the people.

Every aspect of the Day of Covering holds considerable prophetic meaning in its symbolism, all of which is related to the prophesied Messiah and the promises of God regarding salvation from everlasting death.

The command that Aaron the High Priest was to make a covering of blood for sin, symbolically pictures the price Messiah would pay to redeem all sinners who repent. It is the same for everyone today; no being's life is worth more or less than anyone else's. Everyone has sinned (Rom. 3:23) and therefore earned the death penalty (Rom. 6:23), thus requiring the same ransom price in order to be redeemed. The money collected from the sons of Israel was given for the service of the tent of meeting, "that it may be a memorial for the sons of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for their lives" (vs. 16). In other words, the ransom money became a memorial, a reminder, that the appropriate price for redemption must be paid (cf. 1Cor. 6:19-20).

So we have three aspects involved here. The first is the appropriate sacrifice which is sufficient to cover the price required to redeem sinners, making forgiveness possible. Second, the merciful

application of that payment by God as a covering for sin; leading to the third aspect, reconciliation to God. These three elements of the redemption price, the covering of sins, and reconciliation are the concepts William Tyndale tried to encompass in the one word he invented – Atonement.

In the following scriptures we will examine the first covenant Bible instructions regarding Aaron the High Priest, who represented Christ, and atonement,

Now the LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they had approached the presence of the LORD and died. <sup>2</sup> The LORD said to Moses: “Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die; for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. <sup>3</sup> “Aaron shall enter the holy place with this: with a bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. <sup>4</sup> “He shall put on the holy linen tunic, and the linen undergarments shall be next to his body, and he shall be girded with the linen sash and attired with the linen turban (these are holy garments). Then he shall bathe his body in water and put them on. <sup>5</sup> “He shall take from the congregation of the sons of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering. <sup>6</sup> “Then Aaron shall offer the bull for the sin offering which is for himself, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household. <sup>7</sup> “He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the doorway of the tent of meeting. <sup>8</sup> “Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. <sup>9</sup> “Then Aaron shall offer the goat on which the lot for the LORD fell, and make it a sin offering. <sup>10</sup> “But the goat on which the lot for the scapegoat fell shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, to send it into the wilderness as the scapegoat. <sup>11</sup> “Then Aaron shall offer the bull of the sin offering which is for himself and make atonement [SHD 3722] for himself and for his household, and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering which is for himself. <sup>12</sup> “He shall take a firepan full of coals of fire from upon the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground sweet incense [cf. Rev. 5:8], and bring it inside the veil. <sup>13</sup> “He shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the ark of the testimony, otherwise he will die. <sup>14</sup> “Moreover, he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; also in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. <sup>15</sup> “Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat. <sup>16</sup> “He shall make atonement [SHD 3722] for the holy place, because of the impurities of the sons of Israel and because of their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and thus he shall do for the tent of meeting which abides with them in the midst of their impurities. <sup>17</sup> “When he goes in to make atonement [SHD 3722] in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement [SHD 3722] for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel. <sup>18</sup> “Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement [SHD 3722] for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar on all sides. <sup>19</sup> “With his finger he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it seven times and cleanse it, and from the impurities of the sons of Israel consecrate it. <sup>20</sup> “When he finishes atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall offer the live goat. <sup>21</sup> “Then Aaron shall lay both of his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the sons of Israel and all their transgressions in regard to all their sins; and he shall lay them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who stands in readiness. <sup>22</sup> “The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to a solitary land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness. <sup>23</sup> “Then Aaron shall come into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the holy place, and shall leave them there. <sup>24</sup> “He shall bathe his body with water in a holy place and put on his clothes, and come forth and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people and make atonement [SHD 3722] for himself and for the people. <sup>25</sup> “Then he shall offer up in smoke the fat of the sin offering on the altar. <sup>26</sup> “The one who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water; then afterward he shall come into the camp. <sup>27</sup> “But the bull of the sin offering and the goat of the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement [SHD 3722] in the holy place, shall be taken outside the camp [Heb. 13:12-13], and they shall burn their hides, their flesh, and their refuse in the fire. <sup>28</sup> “Then the one who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body with water, then afterward he shall come into the camp. <sup>29</sup> “This shall be a permanent statute for you: in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall humble your souls and not do any work, whether the native, or the alien who sojourns among you; <sup>30</sup> for it is on this day that atonement [SHD 3722] shall be made for you to cleanse you; you will be clean from all your sins before the LORD. <sup>31</sup> “It is to be a sabbath of solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls; it is a permanent statute. <sup>32</sup> “So the priest who is anointed and ordained to serve as priest in his father’s place shall make atonement [SHD 3722]: he shall thus put on the linen garments, the holy garments, <sup>33</sup> and make atonement [SHD 3722] for the holy sanctuary, and he shall

make atonement [SHD 3722] for the tent of meeting and for the altar. He shall also make atonement [SHD 3722] for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.<sup>34</sup> "Now you shall have this as a permanent statute, to make atonement [SHD 3722] for the sons of Israel for all their sins once every year." And just as the LORD had commanded Moses, so he did (Lev. 16:1-34; cf. Jn. 16:8-11; Ed. notes in brackets).

In verse 2, the mercy seat on top of the Ark of the Covenant is mentioned. Its origin is also from the Hebrew word 3722 *kaphar*. It is 3727 *kapporeth*. Unfortunately it's rendered "mercy seat" which does not accurately represent the meaning of the Hebrew word. The *kapporeth* piece is called the place of atonement. It's also called the golden plate of propitiation.

The *kapporeth* piece was placed on top of the Ark of the Covenant which held the Ten Commandments, upon which the High Priest sprinkled the blood of the offering 7 times on the Day of Atonement, symbolically reconciling God's people Israel after they had repented for breaking His law. It was a slab of gold measuring 2.5 by 1.5 cubits; on it were the two golden cherubim facing each other whose outstretched wings came together above it.

The covering piece represents the grace of God and His perfect law extended by and revealed in the functions of the two cherubim above the Covering piece. God's grace is able to cover all sin, and sin is the transgression of God's law (1Jn. 3:4). The commandments in the law of God are represented by the two tablets of the testimony given to Israel and kept in the Ark of the Covenant under the *kapporeth* piece.

As mentioned above, the "Day of Atonement" is the English phrase for the Hebrew *Yom Kippur*. The root for the word "Kippur" is *kafar*, which appears to be derived from the word *kofer*, meaning "ransom." This word is parallel to the word "redeem" (Ps. 49:7) and means "to atone by offering a substitute." The majority of applications in the Hebrew Bible concern *making atonement* by the priestly ritual of sprinkling the sacrificial blood to remove sin or defilement. The life-blood of the sacrificial animal was required in exchange for the life-blood of the worshipper who sinned (the symbolic expression of an innocent life given in place of a sinner (Isa. 53:12; cf. Jn. 1:29). This symbolism is further clarified by the action of the worshipper in placing his hands on the head of the animal that is being sacrificed and confessing his sins over it (Lev. 16:21; 1:4; 4:4, etc.) and then killing it.

The root word also appears in the term *Kapporet* (commonly referred to as the *Mercy Seat*, but perhaps better rendered as simply the Place of Covering). The *Kapporet* is the golden cover of the Ark in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle or temple where the sacrificial blood was presented,

Aaron shall make atonement on its horns once a year; he shall make atonement on it with the blood of the sin offering of atonement once a year throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD (Ex. 30:10).

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life (Lev. 17:11).

In verse 2 of Leviticus 16, Christ as Almighty God's representative s appeared in the cloud above the place of covering on the ark which contained the Commandments in the Holy of Holies – the inner sanctuary of the temple. This signifies Christ's role as the Morning Star or Light Bearer who brings God's law (Deut. 33:1-4 [NKJV]; 2Pt. 1:19; Rev. 22:16) to the people (see also Mt. 12:8; Lk 6:5). Note also his appearance above the Seat or Place of Covering (Mercy Seat) in Leviticus 16:2, which designates his role as Redeemer whose sacrifice makes reconciliation possible because he paid the ransom price for all sinners who repent.

The law of God requires everyone's life for breaking God's commands. The only offering sufficient to redeem one's life according to the law is the unblemished Lamb of God, Jesus Christ (Isa. 53:12; Jn. 1:29; Ac. 4:12).

In Leviticus 16:5, two male goats were taken from the congregation of the sons of Israel for the sin offering. A ram was selected for the burnt offering. The bull was a sin offering for Aaron to make atonement (a covering for sin) for himself and his house (vs 6). The two goats were presented before the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting (vs 7), and Aaron cast lots for the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the Azazel.

Let's examine the Hebrew word *Azazel*,

SHD 5799 aza'zel. Four occurrences in the OT; AV translates as "scapegoat" four times. Strong's definition: 1 entire removal, scapegoat. 1A refers to the goat used for sacrifice for the sins of the people. 1B meaning dubious (From Strong's Hebrew Dictionary of the Bible).

5799; entire removal. Arabic (□ z) *remove*, [a fallen angel]. Lv 16 Day of Atonement, = *entire removal* of sin and guilt from sacred places into desert on back of goat, symb. of entire forgiveness. (From the *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*).

Of note is the fact that this word has a preposition attached to it, Heb. *-* (SHD 4200): *to* or *toward*. Therefore, when this preposition is used in reference to the goat, the direction of action or purpose is **toward** Azazel. This aspect is also mentioned in the TWOT (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*). Under the word Azazel, the following rather lengthy article states:

1593 (□ *āzāzē*) **Azazel** (ASV allows for the translation "removal" in the margin).

This word appears four times in the OT, all in Lev 16 (8, 10, 26) where the ritual for the Day of Atonement is described. After the priest has made atonement for himself and his house, he is to take two goats on behalf of Israel. One is to be a sacrifice to the Lord, the other is to be the "scape goat," i.e. the goat for Azazel. In all four appearances of this word, it has the preposition "to" attached to it. This word has been variously understood and translated. The versions (LXX, Symmachus, Theodotian and the Vulgate) have understood it to stand for the "goat that departs," considering it to be derived from two Hebrew words: *ēz* "goat" and *āzal* ("turn off."). By associating it with the Arabic word *azāla* "banish," "remove," it has been rendered "for entire removal" (IBD [*Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G. Buttrick, 1962] loc. cit.).

The rabbinic interpretation has generally considered this word to designate the place to which the goat was sent: a desert, a solitary place, or the height from which the goat was thrown (cf. Lev 16:22). The final possibility is to regard this word as designating a personal being so as to balance the word "Lord." In this way Azazel could be an evil spirit (Enoch 8:1; 10:4; cf. II Chr 11:15; Isa 34:14; Rev 18:2) or even the devil himself (KD [K. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*] loc. cit.), standing logically in antithesis to Lord. However the Enoch references to Azazel as a demon are doubtless dependent on the author's own interpretation of Lev 16 and Gen 6:4. Some who adopt this demon reference of Lev 16 also consider the passage to be of late authorship (P document).

The actual use and meaning of this word in Lev 16 is somewhat uncertain. However, regardless of its precise meaning, the significant dimension is the removal of the sins of the nation by the imposition of them on the goat. In this passage sin seems to be hypostatized (a concept that becomes a reality) and therefore readily transferrable to the goat. Indeed vs 21 and 22 state that this goat is to bear away the sin of the people. Such a ritual would illustrate vividly the physical removal of defilement from the camp to a solitary place where it would no longer infest the nation. A parallel to the scapegoat can be seen in the ritual for a recovered leper. Two birds were selected. One was to be killed and both the leper and the living bird were to be touched with its blood. Then the living bird was released. This bird carried away the evil, the leprosy itself, into the open field and then the leper was pronounced clean (Lev 14:1-9). This concept of the removal of guilt can be seen in Ps. 103:12 where God "removes" our transgressions from us.

In the NT John the Baptist identified Jesus as the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29, 36). This language is sacrificial, yet nowhere in the Law is a lamb spoken of as a bearer of the people's sins. The paschal lamb is not a sin offering. The description of the Savior as a lamb is unknown to late Judaism. Furthermore, the phrase "the lamb of God" is an unparalleled genitive combination. John may have had in mind that Christ as the paschal lamb bespeaks our great deliverance from the bondage of sin. However, what seems more likely is that he had a complex of ideas in mind. Some words of Isa 53 are discernible here: "as a sheep led to the slaughter, and a lamb dumb before his shearers ... whose soul was made a guilt offering ... and who bore the sin of many." But also discernible here is an allusion to the scapegoat. This fact is clearly seen in the words "taketh away" (cf. I Jn 3:5). In Christ are consummated all the atonement concepts of the OT." From: TWOT (*Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*).

It is important to note that the description of Christ "as a sheep led to the slaughter, and a lamb dumb before his shearers..." denotes his willingness to endure the beatings and the suffering of death upon the stake in the place of all sinful beings so they might receive life.

Under the word Azazel, the *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*, says that it is:

only found in the law of the day of atonement (Lev. 16:8, 10, 26), respecting which many conjectures have been made. (the author says) I have no doubt that it should be rendered *avert*, ἀλεξίκακος.

The name *Azazel* is also used by the Arabs as that of an evil demon.

The etymology above proposed is that which was of old expressed by the LXX, although generally overlooked or else misunderstood.

There (*Azazel*) is rendered in verse 8, τῷ Ἀποπομπαίῳ (apopompiyo).

Apopompiyo is an ancient Greek word used in the Septuagint and translated *scapegoat* in many English Bibles. There are two entries regarding apopompiyo from: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint : Revised Edition*,

**ἀποπομπαῖος, -α, -ον**, Lv 16,8,10; *carrying away (evil) (of the scapegoat)*; \*Lv 16,8 τῷ ἀποπομπαίῳ *to the one who carries away*.

**ἀποπομπή, -ῆς**, Lv 16,10; *sending away, elimination*; \*Lv 16,10 εἰς τὴν ἀποπομπήν *as the elimination*.

From the *Liddell-Scott Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, it states,

**ἀποπομπαῖος, α, ον**, *carrying away evil, of the scapegoat*, Lxx Le.16.8sq. **II.** *to be cast out, abominable*, Ph.1.238. (Philo)

The explanation of the use of the English word *scapegoat* for the Hebrew *azazel* is as follows,

Azazel is the word translated as "scapegoat" in the King James Version of the Bible (Leviticus chapter 16). In 1611 King James' translators borrowed the word 'scapegoat' from William Tyndale's translation from around 1530. Tyndale had translated 'azazel' (the name of the cliff the goat was pushed over, or more likely the demon it was sent out to in the desert) as 'ez ozel' - literally, "the goat that departs"; hence "the goat that escapes," or, for short, "(e)scape goat." Since this goat, with the sins of the people placed on it, is then sent over a cliff or driven into the wilderness to perish, the word "scapegoat" has come to mean a person, often innocent, who is blamed and punished for the sins, crimes or sufferings of others (Wikipedia).

The King James translators and William Tyndale are the source of the popular usage and understanding of azazel as *scapegoat*. The basic meaning of azazel appears to be the simple idea that it carries away the sins of the many, yet the goat appears to remain alive. We'll examine this more closely for greater clarification.



The goat upon which the lot fell for the Lord was to be a sin offering (vs. 9). The goat upon which the lot fell for Azazel is to be presented before the Lord alive to make atonement (a covering) upon it, and then send it into the wilderness (vs. 10).

The first goat represents Jesus Christ as the sin offering sufficient to take away the sins of the world. If the second goat, Azazel, indeed represents Satan, it would appear from Leviticus 16:10 that a covering of sin was provided to deal with sin, before the goat was sent into the wilderness. In other words, the means by which Satan, and all the sins he is responsible for, could be forgiven was made available before he was banished into the wilderness, as he is the cause of, and the one responsible for all the sins that would ever be committed, as he is the author of sin and the father of lies (Jn. 8:44).

The covering God made available to cover the first sin committed by Satan and before his banishment to the wilderness was,

...the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8b).

Jesus Christ was willing to be the sacrifice necessary to cover sin the moment Satan first broke the law of God. (Eze. 28:14-15 cf. Isa. 14:12)

The term *wilderness* is used repeatedly in scripture to symbolize the region where the fallen angels dwell. The term "beasts of the field" is often used figuratively of the spiritual host as we see in Genesis,

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made (Gen. 3:1; emphasis added).

It was in this same wilderness that Jesus Christ went when he was tempted by Satan,

And it came about in those days that Jesus of Nazareth came from Galilee, and was baptized in the Jordan by John. <sup>10</sup> And straightaway, coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens separated, and the spirit, like a dove, coming down in to him. <sup>11</sup> And a voice occurred out of the heavens, "You are My son, whom I love. In you I am well-pleased." <sup>12</sup> And straightaway the spirit sent him out into the wilderness. <sup>13</sup> And he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by the Adversary; and he was with the wild beasts, and the angels were serving him (Mk. 1:9-13; RNT).

From the scriptures examined to this point, the meaning of the goats appear to be twofold. First, the one upon which the lot fell for the Lord (YHVH - Yahovah) was to be a sin offering for the people. This goat represents the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Lamb whose blood is sufficient to cover all sin.

The second goat upon which the lot fell for Azazel appears to represent the one responsible for introducing sin and all subsequent lawbreaking. This goat is sent to the wilderness which is symbolic of the realm of the fallen host who will also have an opportunity to repent, but do not appear to do so prior to Christ's second coming. Therefore the goat which is sent to or toward Azazel in the wilderness would represent the first being who committed sin, and is therefore responsible for introducing sin – namely, Satan (Jn. 8:44, cf. Lev. 16:20-28). It's also possible this goat represents a twofold aspect of Christ's atoning work, which we see first among those whom God now calls into the first resurrection, and afterward all the rest including the fallen host who will experience purification symbolized by fire (Rev. 20:5-6; cf. Rev. 3:18).

The second goat was to bear all the sins of Israel. It was not sacrificed but remained alive and was sent into the wilderness by a man who stood in readiness. This ready man appears to represent Christ as the agent of Almighty God, and Judge of all, prepared to deal with sin as Judge according to the plan and will of his Father (cf. Rom. 2:16).

The many symbols involved with this important Day of Covering picture how God completely deals with lawbreaking in two ways. First is the ransom price Messiah paid with his life which covers the sins, upon repentance, of every being that ever has or will sin. This concept is embodied by the goat upon which the lot fell for the Lord and is sacrificed. Second is the symbolism of dealing with the author of sin for introducing and perpetuating sin, which is Satan. Although a covering for sin is provided, the Azazel goat is released in the wilderness (spirit-realm) because he (Satan) currently remains unrepentant and has not yet faced judgment or correction.

During the millennium, Satan, the god of this world (2Cor. 4:4), will be bound as part of his judgment (Jn. 16:11) so that he cannot deceive anyone in any way during this time,

And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; <sup>3</sup> and he threw him into the abyss, and shut *it* and sealed *it* over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time (Rev. 20:2-3).

The occurrence of the Day of Covering in God's calendar, as it relates to the sequence of the Holy Days of that time of year, it is also of importance. It is observed on the tenth day of the seventh month. Preceding this day is the Day of Blowing or Trumpets, which occurs on the first day of the seventh month and is a New Moon day. The Festival of Tabernacles occurs from the fifteenth day of the seventh month to the twenty-first. The final Holy Day in this sequence is called the Last Great Day and falls on the twenty-second day.

The first Holy Day in this sequence is the Day of Blowing which denotes the power and sovereignty of Almighty God over all creation and foreshadows the future declaration of the return of Jesus Christ and the commencement of God's kingdom on earth. The Day of Covering represents the ransom paid by Jesus Christ which is necessary to redeem all sinful beings. The fulfillment of this day by Jesus Christ is a prerequisite to Satan being judged, all sin being permanently removed, and the declaration of victory over death at the culmination of God's plan of salvation (1Cor. 15:54-57). The Festival of Tabernacles (temporary dwellings) represents the temporary (mortal) dwelling of all physical beings and foreshadows the permanent (spiritual) dwelling that only God, the Father, can provide and does so according to His divine judgment. The Last Great Day is the final Holy Day of this sequence. It pictures the Day of Judgment when everyone, including the fallen host, who was not in the first resurrection are raised (second resurrection; cf. Rev. 20:6) and given the opportunity to repent after they come to understand the truth of God and His plan. They will then be judged accordingly.

God commanded that his servants do not do any work on this day,

You shall not do any work on this same day, for it is a day of atonement, to make atonement on your behalf before the LORD your God (Lev. 23:28).

The expression to *humble oneself* is another way of describing fasting. Those who do not fast on Atonement will be cut off from God's people,

If there is any person who will not humble himself on this same day, he shall be cut off from his people (Lev. 23:29).

Atonement, or the Day of Covering, is a Sabbath of complete rest and a day of fasting. It is observed on the tenth day of the seventh month beginning at dark (evening) following the end of the ninth day, until the next evening at dark,

You shall do no work at all. It is to be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwelling places. <sup>32</sup> "It is to be a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall humble your souls; on the ninth of the month at evening, from evening until evening you shall keep your sabbath" (Lev. 23:31-32).

As are all Sabbaths, the Day of Covering is holy and must not be profaned,

Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people (Ex. 31:14).

Every Israelite in the first covenant, who profaned a Sabbath such as the weekly day of rest or any Holy Day such as the Day of Covering, was cut off from God's people Israel. This sentence was carried out as a function of the nation under the authority of Almighty God (Num. 15:32-36). The same sentence applies to all who are of the second covenant, however, now the profaner is cut off from God's spiritual nation (1Cor. 5:1-5). As God does not change (Mic. 3:6) nor does his son the Christ (Heb. 13:8), and the law of God emanates directly from Almighty God as an expression of His love and divine judgment, the same principles apply in the kingdom during the millennial reign of Jesus Christ (Isa. 66:23-24).

While Israel was in the wilderness, Moses demonstrated the correct way of fasting,

So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water... (Ex. 34:28a; emphasis added; cf. 1Sa. 7:5-6).

Likewise, after the apostle Paul, then known as Saul, was confronted by Christ in the vision on the road to Damascus, he fasted for three days also without food or water,

Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; and leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. <sup>9</sup> And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank (Ac. 2:8-9).

It's a proven medical fact that periodical, short-term fasting provides physical benefit to the human body, but the purpose for Biblical fasting (completely abstaining from all food and water) is for spiritual reasons. When fasting for a particular reason such as a repentant response for committing sin, it demonstrates to God that the individual is genuine and takes their situation very seriously. Consequently, our motives must be pure when we fast. Jesus Christ made this plain when he instructed his disciples about fasting,

And when you fast, do not become sad-faced like the hypocrites, for they cause their normal countenance to disappear so that their fasting shines forth to others. Amen, I say to you they have received their reward. <sup>17</sup> "But you, when fasting, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> "so that you are not seen to be fasting by others, but by your Father who is hidden, and your Father who sees what is hidden inside, will give to you (Mt. 6:16-18; RNT).

When an individual comes to realize they have lived contrary to God's law and desires to turn to Him seeking forgiveness and change, doing so with fasting shows their genuine sorrow,

Yet even now," declares the LORD, "Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning;<sup>13</sup> and rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness and relenting of evil (Joel 2:12-13).

There are other reasons for fasting as well. For example, when Christ fasted (completely abstained from all food and water) forty days and forty nights, Satan the Adversary tried to tempt him in order to undermine the Father's plans,

And the Tempter came and said to him, "If you are the son of God, command these stones that they would become bread."<sup>4</sup> But he answered and said, "**It has been written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'**" (Mt. 4:3-4; RNT; words in bold denote OT quote).

Jesus Christ here quoted the last part of Deuteronomy 8:3,

He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD (emphasis added).

The manna by which God fed the Israelites in the wilderness was symbolic of the bread of heaven. In other words, the food which God's people truly live by is spiritual in nature and comes from Almighty God. This heavenly bread is the bread of life and is emblematic of the spiritual work of Christ. Through his death and resurrection all fallen individuals have the opportunity to receive the bread of heaven (God's Holy Spirit given through Christ) which imparts life to all who repent and obey God (Jn. 1:4; Ac. 5:32; 1Jn. 3:24).

There are occasions when God's servants might set aside a period of time specifically to fast and seek God's will in order to better understand His judgments and His ways. The Day of Covering which is a commanded period of time for God's people to fast and abstain from work, is also an opportunity for us to seek God's judgment so that we are better prepared to serve God and judge the nations under Christ during the millennium (Lk. 22:29-30; 1Cor. 6:2-3; Rev. 22:26-27).

The Day of Covering is set aside by Almighty God for His followers during which they fast, pray and reflect upon the significance of this appointed time. By doing so, we learn more about the way God will ultimately deal with sin through His perfect judgment and the covering for sin He provided by which the entire fallen creation can be redeemed - through the blood shed by His son Jesus Christ.

It's by Jesus Christ's example of selflessness and sacrifice for others that we are called to emulate (1Pe. 2:21-25). Consequently, a true Christian is to present him, or herself, before God as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1).

Fasting and prayer on the commanded Day of Covering is just one way we fulfill God's will.

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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