

# Commentary on Hebrews

## Review

### MEANING AND APPLICATIONS OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

#### I. Azazel – Compound Word in Hebrew: Means – Strong Removal

- A. Azazel is a proper name – we normally refer to it as the *Scape Goat*.
- B. The etymology of the compound word
  - 1. Entire removal
  - 2. To make strong; to strengthen
  - 3. Both words make the idea of a *strong triumph over and removal of sin*.

#### II. The Two Goats are ONLY ONE Sin Offering

Therefore they are a unit, accomplishing two sides of the same redemption. [Leviticus 16:5 NIV](#)  
*From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.*

- A. The singular form indicates a unit
- B. Each goat represents a different aspect of atonement
  - 1. The goat “for Jehovah” was the CAUSE of forgiveness.
    - a. By dying, this goat would symbolize the MEANS of reconciliation between God and man.
  - 2. The goat “for Azazel” was the EFFECT of forgiveness.
    - a. This goat, surviving the ritual, would symbolize the EFFECT of the sacrificial unit

#### III. Far out explanations concerning Azazel

- A. Some suppose Azazel is some evil spirit that inhabits the wilderness.
- B. Others think Azazel is Satan himself
  - 1. He caused these sins so they should be sent back to him
  - 2. Supposedly, Satan is to bear the sins of the people forever
- C. Others suggest, on the basis of [Leviticus 17:7ff](#), that it is some kind of demon worship where the goat was sacrificed in the wilderness
  - 1. This sin of idolatry was still in practice by Jeroboam in [2 Chronicles 11:15ff](#)
  - 2. This may have been as a result of the idolatrous practices of the Egyptians who worshipped their sacred bull and male goat.
- D. Another variation of the Satan idea seems to have a little more reason behind it, even if for the most part it is pure conjecture – but even so, some of it is true.
  - 1. Scriptures teach Satan has power over man ONLY because of his sins
    - a. Satan is the accuser of God’s people
      - i. In Job his name means “the accuser” – [Job 1:6-11](#). He accused Job of receiving God’s favor.

## Continuation

### MEANING AND APPLICATIONS OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

- E. The most acceptable answer seems to be explained in [Hebrews 10:1](#) – “The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves.”

1. This passage is talking about the Day of Atonement sacrifices for the writer specifies: “For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.”
2. So these sacrifices offered on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month were only a shadow of the future REAL sacrifice of Christ!
3. Therefore, as far as Israel was concerned those sins were forgiven and Israel goes free of guilt – to be forgotten!
4. As far as God is concerned, those sins are forgiven but not really covered, not actually atoned for because:
  - a. Although God lifted the sin from Israel and assumes responsibility for it – He is still not freed from it.
  - b. Where are the sins?
    - i. For Israel – they are removed
    - ii. For God – they are on the head of a goat in the wilderness
  - c. God had simply written an IOU against the cross of Jesus, at which time those sins would be actually covered and atoned for
    - i. [Hebrews 9:15 NIV](#) For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom **to set them free from the sins** committed under the first covenant.
    - ii. [Romans 3:25 NIV](#) God presented Christ as a **sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood**--to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance **he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished...**
  - d. And really, this is a mere human point of view, since Jesus was slain in God’s mind before the foundation of the world!
    - i. [1 Peter 1:18-20 NIV](#) For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, (19) **but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.** (20) **He was chosen before the creation of the world,** but was revealed in these last times for your sake.
    - ii. [Revelation 13:8 NIV](#) All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast--all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, **the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.**
  - e. God, who is omnipotent and omniscient and omnipresent, can act on the cross at any time He wants – He is not bound by time!
5. And yet, He built into the sacrificial system the symbolic representation of His plan of salvation, even for the Jews.

- a. So that symbolically, in SHADOW form, those sins were placed on the head of a goat and sent to the cross of Christ
  - b. So that, if the Day of Atonement was always observed, when Christ died, He would bear in fact all the sins from the heads of some 1600 goats and actually atone for them on the cross
  - c. [1 Peter 2:24 NIV](#) "He himself bore our sins" **in his body on the cross**, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."
  - d. [2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV](#) God made him who had no sin **to be sin for us**, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.
  - e. [1 John 2:2 NIV](#) **He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins**, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
  - f. [1 John 4:10 NIV](#) This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and **sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins**.
6. Now the righteousness of God has been vindicated in the forgiveness of the Jew before the cross and in forgiving us afterwards.
  7. In the case of Joshua, the High Priest of [Zechariah 3:1-5](#) we can see how **Satan accuses God's people and Jesus defends them in spite of guilt**:
    - a. The high priest is standing "before the angel of the Lord God (Yahweh)" perhaps on the Day of Atonement – since this is when the priest would come before the Lord in the Holy of Holies dressed in his simple garb – seen as "filthy garments".
      - i. The Angel of the Lord God, who is Jesus, was "standing by", promising the cleansing of sin from the land in a single day (v.9).
      - ii. Satan was also "standing by" as his "adversary", accusing him.
    - b. The Lord God commanded that clean robes and mitre (turban) be placed on Joshua
      - i. The Lord God rebukes Satan, indicating Joshua and God's people have been rescued from the fire (captivity) to accomplish God's purpose (Amos 4:11), even though they indeed are guilty of sin.
      - ii. He then announces to Joshua: "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you."
      - iii. [Zechariah 3:8-9 NIV](#) "'Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, **who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.** (9) See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the LORD Almighty, **'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.**