

Day of Atonement Ceremony

On the Day of Atonement there was a little understood ceremony that involved two goats and the casting of lots. We are going to use the pattern of the tabernacle complex to show the meaning of the two goats, and the New Covenant fulfillment of this ceremony.

The Tabernacle

The tabernacle complex in figure 1 is a blueprint of the crucifixion site at Jerusalem. The altar in the outer court represents the Mount of Olives, and the laver between the altar and the tabernacle represents the Brook Kidron, which is in the valley. The tabernacle itself represents the temple mount, which is a type of the heavenly Jerusalem.

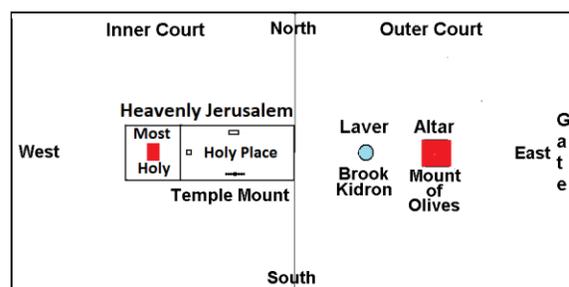


Figure 1

This is the pattern that we are going to follow in explaining the Day of Atonement ceremony.

The ceremony primarily involves the altar and the Mercy Seat in the Most Holy Place. By using this pattern we will be able to see the past and future fulfillments of the ceremony.

The Two Goats

Aaron the high priest was to “...take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the LORD, and the other for the scapegoat [5799, *Azazel, goat of departure, to remove, to separate*]. “And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD’s lot fell, and **offer him for a sin offering**” (Leviticus 16:8, 9).

The one lot that was “for the LORD” was to be used as an offering for sin. Jesus Christ is the only one who has ever been qualified to be an offering for sin. The Azazel goat **was not sacrificed**. A sin offering involves a sacrifice. The “sin offering” represented the offering of Jesus Christ, who, “...after He had offered **one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12).

Prior to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, the people had a choice between two men. Barabbas [912, *son of Abba, Father*], who was an insurrectionist, a murderer (Mark 15:7), and a robber (John 18:40). Those are the qualities of Satan, of whom Barabbas was a type.

Caiaphas, who was the high priest at that time, said, “... it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spoke he not of himself:

but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad. Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put Him to death” (John 11:51-53).

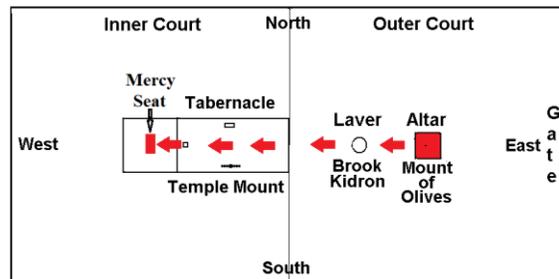
Barabbas, who was guilty, was let go at Passover, but Jesus Christ was crucified as an offering for the sins of mankind.

The Goat of the Sin Offering

Before Aaron could enter the Most Holy Place, he had to offer a bullock for a sin offering for himself, and he had to take the blood of the offering, and a censer of incense, and enter the holiest. He was to sprinkle the blood of the bullock, with his finger, upon the mercy seat and before the mercy seat, seven times (Leviticus 16:11-14). Under the Old Covenant, each day the priests were “...to offer up a sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s...” (Hebrews 7:27). Jesus Christ did this once “...when He offered up Himself” (v. 27).

After making the offerings for his own sins, the high priest “...shall kill the goat of the sin offering, **that is for the people, and bring his blood within the veil**, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: and he shall make atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness [2932, *impurity, defilement*] of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions [6588, *rebellion*] **in all their sins**: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness [2932]” (vv. 15, 16).

In figure two, the red arrows represent the high priest taking the blood of the sin offering from the altar into the Most Holy Place, and sprinkling the blood seven times.



Jesus Enters the Most Holy Place from the Altar

Jesus was crucified on Wednesday, the 14th day of the first month, on the Mount of Olives. Jesus was buried for “...three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). Seventy-two hours after His burial He was resurrected late on the Sabbath (Saturday the 17th).

Following His resurrection, i.e. beginning on the first day of the week, Jesus “...showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them **forty days**...” (Acts 1:3). Counting forty days, beginning with the 18th, brings us to the 27th day of the second month (Iyar). (Thirteen days left in the first month, plus twenty-seven days equals forty days.)

“And...while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight....Then returned they from the Mount of Olives...” (Acts 1:3, 9, 12).

Jesus ascended from the Mount of Olives, i.e. the altar, **on the 27th of Iyar with His blood of the New Covenant**. The New Covenant contains **twenty-seven books**. Jesus was crucified from the third to the ninth hour. There are only two whole numbers that can be evenly divided into twenty-seven. They are three and nine. The hours of the crucifixion did not just happen, but were ordained by Almighty God.

“But Christ being come a **high priest** of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; **neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us....He is the mediator of the New Covenant...**” (Hebrews 9:11, 12).

The High Priest Returns to the Altar

After making atonement in the tabernacle, the high priest “... shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat [*the sin offering*], and put it upon the horns of the altar round about. And he shall sprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger seven times, and cleanse it, and hallow it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel” (Leviticus 16:18, 19).

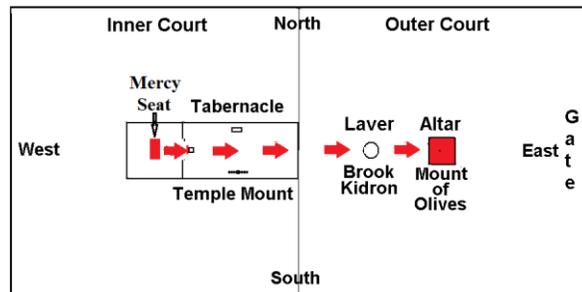


Figure 3

The picture that is presented in this part of the ceremony is that of the high priest returning from the tabernacle in heaven **on the Day of Atonement**, with the blood of the sin offering that is for the people, and returning to the Mount of Olives. This part of the Day of Atonement Ceremony has not been fulfilled. Jesus Christ will fulfill this part of the ceremony on a future Day of Atonement.

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He does judge and make war.... And He was clothed with a vesture **dipped** [911, or *immersed*] **in blood**: and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean” (Revelation 19:11, 13, 14).

Jesus, the High Priest, will return to the Mount of Olives. “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations ... And His feet shall stand in that day upon **the Mount of Olives**, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof

from **east to west**, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the valley shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And you shall flee to the valley of [My] mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal: yes you shall flee...and the LORD My God shall come, **and all the saints with you**" (Zechariah 14:3-5).

Azal is *Strong's* 682. The *Brown-Driver-Briggs* and *Gesenius* Hebrew lexicons render it as, "near Jerusalem." Going from the east to the west through the valley that is created when the Mount of Olives is split in two will lead to the entrance of Jerusalem. *The Living Bible*, which is a paraphrase, correctly renders Azal as "the city gate," which would be the entrance to Jerusalem.

The Mount of Olives is where Jesus shed His blood, and it corresponds to the altar of burnt offering in the tabernacle complex. When the mountain splits in two, it is like the opening of a door. Jesus Christ is "...the **door** [2374, *a door, a gate, an entrance*]: **by Me if any man enter in**, he shall be saved..." (John 10:9). Who will go through this open door?

The great meaning of the Day of Atonement concerns "...a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms [5404, *palm branches*] in their hands" (Revelation 7:9). Who is this great multitude? "...These are they which **come out of great tribulation**, and have washed their robes, and made them white **in the blood of the Lamb**" (v. 14). These are those who will live through the great tribulation, and will be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ after His return to the earth as "...KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:16).

Azazel

After making atonement for the altar, the high priest "... shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, **putting them on the head of the goat**, and shall **send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness**: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited [1509, *of separation, solitary*]: and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness" (Lev. 16:20-22).

The living goat **is not an offering for sin**. An offering for sin requires the shedding of blood, for "...without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). The sins are being placed on the head of him "... which deceives the whole world..." (Revelation 12:9). This does not remove the sins from man, because only the blood of Jesus Christ can do that. It would be as if someone enticed you to sin. You are still responsible for your own sin, but the one who enticed you is guilty as well.

When Jesus returns to the earth, Satan will be put in a place of separation for one thousand years,

where he will be unable to deceive mankind. The “fit man” represents an angel. “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and **bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up**, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, **till the thousand years should be fulfilled** [5055, *to end, complete, finish*]: and after that he must be loosed for a little season” (Revelation 20:1-3).

Conclusion: We have seen that Jesus fulfilled the first part of the Day of Atonement ceremony when, “...as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death ...” (Philippians 2:8). Then, “... by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12). He will fulfill the remainder of the ceremony when He returns to the Mount of Olives (the altar) on the Day of Atonement, and on that day Satan will be bound for one thousand years.

During **the same period of time that Satan is bound**, the saints “...lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison” (Rev. 20:4, 6). The binding of Satan for a thousand years and the reign of the saints with Christ for a thousand years **run concurrently, not separately**, as is taught by some churches.