

Does the Azazel Goat Represent Jesus Christ or Satan?

Two goats were used in the Day of Atonement ceremony. One of the goats was to be sacrificed as an offering for sin. The other goat, called Azazel in Hebrew, was to be sent away to an uninhabited place. Many believe that both goats represent Jesus Christ, while others believe that the Azazel goat represents Satan. The Day of Atonement ceremony was held in the tabernacle that was in the midst of the children of Israel. By following the ceremony through the pattern of the tabernacle we will be able to correctly identify who Azazel represents.

The Blueprint for the Day of Atonement Ceremony

The tabernacle is laid out in the same pattern as was the crucifixion site at Jerusalem (fig. 1). The altar corresponds to the Mount of Olives where Jesus was crucified. The tabernacle corresponds to the temple mount, and the laver corresponds to the Brook Kidron that is in the valley between the two mountains.

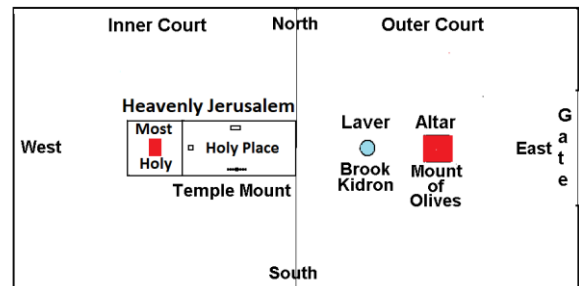


Figure 1

The tabernacle itself is a representation of the heavenly Jerusalem. “For Christ is not entered into the holy places [39, *Most Holy*] made with hands, which are the figures [499, *a copy, a representation*] of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (Hebrews 9:24).

The Two Goats

On the Day of Atonement the high priest was to “...take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids [8163] of the goats [5795, *female goat*] for a sin offering [2403, *sin, sinner, penalty*], and one ram for a burnt offering....And he shall take the two goats [8163], and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting” (Leviticus 16:5, 7).

The Hebrew word used for the two goats is *Strong's* #8163. It is used fifty-nine times in the Old Testament, and it is translated as: he-goat, buck, hairy-one, demon, satyr, rough, faun, and devil. A faun and a satyr are ancient Roman and Greek deities having the body of a man, but the horns, pointed ears, tail, and hind legs of a goat. The goat demons precede the Romans and Greeks.

The worshipping of goat demons was practiced among the children of Israel, and for that reason they were commanded to bring their offerings to the door of the tabernacle (Leviticus 17:3-6).

“And they shall no more offer their sacrifices to devils [8163], after whom they have gone a whoring...” (v. 7). After the kingdom was divided, Jeroboam, the king of Israel, “...ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils [8163], and for the calves which he had made” (2 Chronicles 11:15).

Goats are often used to symbolize someone who practices sin. At the final judgment, Jesus said, “He shall set **the sheep on His right hand**, but **the goats on the left**. Then shall the King say to them on His **right hand**, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world....Then shall He say also to them on the **left hand**, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:33, 34, 41).

Both of the goats that were used in the Day of Atonement ceremony represent sin, but they represent sin in two vastly different ways. One of the goats was to be killed as an offering for sin, which is a type of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the other goat was to be separated from the congregation of Israel and sent to an uninhabited land. The two goats fulfill two entirely different roles.

The Casting of Lots

The casting of lots was used to determine the destinies of the two goats. One goat was going to live and the other one was going to die. “And Aaron [*the high priest*] shall cast lots upon the two goats [8163]; **one lot for the LORD**, and the **other lot for Azazel** [5799, *to remove, to separate, goat of departure*]. And Aaron shall bring the goat [8163] upon which **the LORD’s lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering**” (Leviticus 16:8, 9).

The “LORD’S lot” shows possession. “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). Jesus was the Father’s only Son who was born of flesh. “...**God sending His own Son** in the likeness of sinful flesh, and **by a sacrifice for sin condemned sin in the flesh**” (Romans 8:3).

In the year that Jesus was crucified, He was set apart by the high priest to be offered as a sacrifice. “...Caiaphas, being the high priest that year, said...it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation perish. And this spoke he not of himself: but **being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation**; and not for that nation only, but that 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 11:50-53).

On the eve of His death, Jesus was taken prisoner by the Jews who falsely accused Him. Then they took Him to Pilate. Pilate, after examining Him, said, “...I find in Him no fault at all. But you have a custom, that I should release one to you at Passover: will you therefore that I release

to you the King of the Jews? Then they cried out again, saying, Not this Man, but Barabbas...” (John 19:38-40). Pilate then asked what he should do with Jesus, and they said to him, “Let Him be crucified” (Matthew 27:22).

Barabbas is *Strong's* #912, and it means “son of the Father.” Barabbas was an insurrectionist, a murderer (Mark 15:7), and a robber (John 18:40). These are the qualities of Satan, who is also a spirit son of the Father, but he was not born of flesh. The one who was guilty was allowed to go free, and the innocent One was sentenced to die for the sins of man. The goat that was used as **the sin offering** represented Jesus Christ, “In whom **we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins**” (Colossians 1:14). **This was the fulfillment of the casting of lots over the two goats.**

The Altar, the Blood, and the Most Holy Place

“Then shall he [*the high priest*] kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, **and bring his blood within the veil...and sprinkle it on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:** and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions 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” (Leviticus 16:15, 16).

The red arrows trace the route of the high priest from the altar to the Most Holy Place (fig. 2).

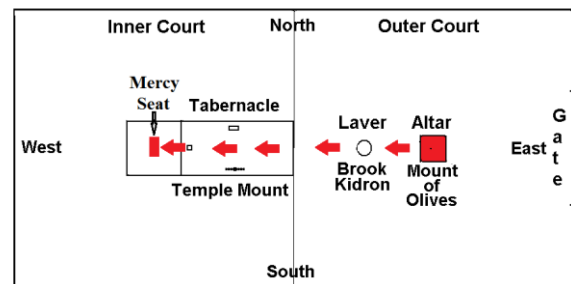


Figure 2

Jesus fulfilled this part of the Day of Atonement ceremony when He ascended from the Mount of Olives to the Most Holy Place in heaven. Jesus “...showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them [*His disciples*] forty days....And...while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight....Then returned they to Jerusalem from the **Mount of Olives**...” (Acts 1:3, 9, 12).

Jesus entered the Most Holy Place by His blood nearly two thousand years ago. “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 Most Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us**” (Hebrews 9:11, 12). Jesus, “...after He had offered **one sacrifice for sins forever**, sat down on the right hand of God” (Hebrews 10:12).

Jesus has remained with the Father in heaven for nearly two thousand years. Sometime in the future He will fulfill the latter part of the ceremony, when He returns to the Mount of Olives (the altar).

From the Most Holy Place to the Altar

After making atonement for the Most Holy Place, then 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 goat, and put it on 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).

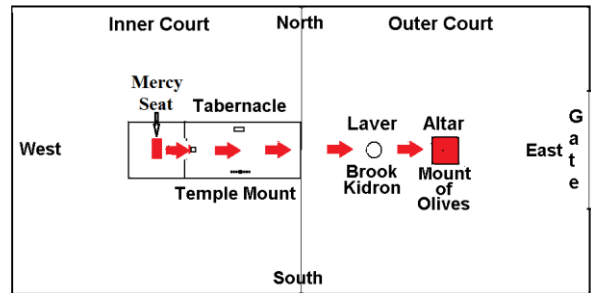


Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the route that the high priest took from the Most Holy Place to the altar with the blood of the sin offering. **This part of the Day of Atonement ceremony will not be fulfilled until Jesus Christ returns to the Mount of Olives 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. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns...And He was clothed with a vesture **dipped in blood:** and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean" (Revelation 19:11-14).

The blood on Jesus' vesture is His blood, by which He entered into the Most Holy Place. Jesus will return with His blood to the altar from which He ascended, i.e. the Mount of Olives, where His sacrifice for sin was made. "Behold, the day of the LORD comes...For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle...Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations...**And His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east...**" (Zechariah 14:1-4).

The High Priest Places Sins on the Head of Azazel

"And when he has made an end of reconciling [3722, *cover, forgive, pardon, atonement*] the Most Holy Place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he 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 upon the head of the live 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 to a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness**" (Leviticus 16:20-22).

The sins of man were placed on the head of Jesus during His crucifixion. Is Jesus Christ going to lay His hands on His own head and confess over Himself the sins of the people, putting them on His own head, and then send Himself off to an uninhabited land? That does not make any sense

at all. Jesus is the high priest, and the high priest does not lay the sins on his own head, but on the head of Azazel. Who is it that is going to be separated from the people at Christ's coming?

“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 of 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...” (Revelation 20:1-3).

Satan is going to be separated from the people. The confining of Satan in an uninhabited place is the fulfillment of Azazel being taken “to a land not inhabited.” However, there are those who believe that Azazel symbolizes the sins of man that are removed to an uninhabited place. “As far as the east is from the west, so far as He has removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12).

One of the problems with this theory is that the sins of man were laid upon Jesus nearly two thousand years ago, and “...we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**” (Hebrews 10:10). The removal of the Azazel goat does not occur until after Jesus' return.

Is Atonement through Azazel?

The instructions given for the Azazel goat are: “But the goat on which the lot fell to be the Azazel, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement [3722, *cover, expiate, appease*] with [5921, *above, over, upon, against*] him, and to let him go for an Azazel into the wilderness” (Leviticus 16:10).

The atonement aspect has confused some into thinking that Azazel represents Jesus Christ. Azazel was not to be killed as an offering for sin, but was to remain alive. The shedding of blood is required for the removal of sin. “And almost all things are by the law purged [2511, *cleansed, purified*] with blood, and **without shedding of blood is no remission** [859, *forgiveness, pardon*]” (Hebrews 9:22). **The Azazel goat was not a sacrifice for sin!** The forgiveness of sins through Azazel **was impossible unless he was a sacrifice for sin.**

The word atonement is *Strong's* #3722, and it is usually, but not always, translated as “atonement.” When Jacob was returning from the land of Haran to the land of Canaan he feared his brother Esau. Therefore he sent gifts ahead of his entourage, “...For he said, I **will appease** [3722] him with the present that goes before me...” (Genesis 32:20). Jacob was not making atonement with, or for, Esau. He was attempting to create a peaceful meeting with his brother.

Appease means: *to cause to subside, to bring to a state of peace or quiet.* Another example is found in Proverbs 16:14. “**The wrath of a king is as messengers of death:** but a wise man **will**

pacify [3722] **it.**” To pacify means: 1. *to make peaceful or calm; appease; tranquilize.* 2. *to establish or secure peace in (a nation, etc.).*

For a thousand years Satan will be separated from the people to an uninhabited place where he will no longer be able to deceive the nations. This will be a time of appeasement and pacification. “...[T]hey shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, **neither shall they learn war anymore**” (Isaiah 2:4).

Notice what happens when the thousand years are over, and Satan is released for a short time. And when the thousand years are completed, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to **deceive** the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together **to battle...**” (Revelation 20:7, 8).

After a thousand years of peace, when Satan is released he brings about another time of war. When the high priest lays the sins of the people on the head of Azazel it represents a judgment against Azazel, who is a type of “...that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, **which deceives the whole world...**” (Revelation 12:9). **However, that does not remove the sins from the people!**

Who is Responsible for Sin?

The judgment placed Satan’s sins on his own head where they belong. Everyone is responsible for his own sins. This is made clear by the events that took place in the Garden of Eden.

The serpent said to the woman, “...Yea, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die. And the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:1-5).

The serpent lied to the woman and deceived her. If you deceive someone into committing a sin, you are guilty of sin, but that does not remove the responsibility from the head of the one who was deceived. The woman did not have to believe the lie, but her vanity got the best of her, and “...she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked...” (vv. 6,7).

Satan did not force the woman to eat of the fruit. The woman made that choice of her own free will. On whom did God place the blame for these events? God held each one responsible for his sins. Satan “...was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it”

(John 8:44). God held the serpent responsible for his sins. The judgment against the serpent did not remove the woman's sins, but he was held accountable for his part in deceiving the woman (Genesis 3:14, 15).

When confronted by God, Eve tried to put the blame on the serpent. "...And the Woman said, the serpent beguiled [5377, *to lead astray, to deceive*] me, and I did eat" (v. 13). It is true that the serpent had lied to the woman, but he did not force her to make the wrong choice. She chose to believe the lie and disobey God; therefore she was held responsible for her own sins (v. 16).

Summary: The Day of Atonement ceremony pictures the death of Jesus as an offering for sin, and His ascension and entrance into the Most Holy Place by His own blood. **The ceremony also reveals that Jesus Christ, our high priest, will return on the Day of Atonement with His blood to the Mount of Olives.** There has been much speculation as to the day of Jesus' return, and yet, the Day of Atonement ceremony reveals the day, just not the year.

At His return Satan, who is represented by Azazel, will be sent to an uninhabited place where he cannot deceive the people. The separation of Azazel from the people ends the Day of Atonement ceremony, but it is not the end of the events that will take place on that day.