

# Notes on Azazel's Culpability and Separation from God



**By Craig M White**

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## ***Notes on Azazel's Culpability and Separation from God***

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### Related Studies

- *The Lord of Hosts and the 'Elemental Spirits of the Universe'*
- *Who – What is the Day Star?*
- *The Three Heavens*

## Introductory Thoughts

These notes are assembled to provide key information on whom Azazel may be identified with: Satan or Christ. There are so many lengthy academic and technical works on the subject that there is no point in writing another one or even attempting to list and summarise them.

Rather, the aim of these notes is to provide quotes and extracts from works by specialists that help in this identification. This, like some other doctrines, is not easy to determine one way or the other. However, I believe that the information contained below suffices.

Many would be aware, there has been a debate for decades or even centuries over whether the Azazel goat pictures Christ or Satan. When one reads the literature on the subject one can see both views and the many reasons for them.<sup>1</sup>

In these notes I refer to aspects surrounding the Azazel mystery that have convinced me of the traditional Church of God position.

These short notes are presented in four parts:

- Satan's fall and separation from God
- Graded Separation from God
- The culpability of the Azazel Goat
- Holy Day typology in the book of Revelation

Finally, several views on the interpretation of Azazel have been extant for centuries including that it symbolizes an aspect of Christ's sacrifice; it represents Satan; or that it is sent into the desert for Azazel.

The famous Ethelbert Bullinger in his *Companion Bible*, made the following observations in Leviticus 16:

**"8 for the scapegoat.** Heb. for 'Azazel. This "for" looks like a personality answering to "for Jehovah". If it be the Evil one who is meant, then it is for his defiance. For in v. 10 atonement is made for this goat, and he is to go free. Where there is atonement there must be forgiveness. See note on v. 22 below."

**"10 to be the scapegoat.** Heb. "to be for 'Azazel" (see vv. 8 and 22). **presented** = made to stand. **with him.** Heb. "for him". See vv. 16, 18. The scapegoat was not used to make atonement, but atonement was made for it. Hence he was to be "let go" free. See v. 22. **wilderness:** or desert, symbol of abode of all evil things (Isa. 13. 21; 34. 14. Matt. 12.43. Luke 8.27; 11.24. Rev. 18. 2). 'Azazel probably the personification of all that is "great and terrible" there (Deut. 1. 19; 8. 15. Jer. 2. 6)."

**"22 shall bear** = shall bear away, as Isa. 53. 4.  
**land not inhabited.** Heb. "a land cut off".

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<sup>1</sup> Some argue that too much is made of Satan being put away and not enough emphasis on Christ's role in the symbolism of the Day of Atonement. That may be correct in some cases, and if it is, should be corrected.

**let go.** This is the point of the type. The live goat was sent away, not in judgment or atonement, but in peace and at liberty. "All" had already been atoned for in the death of the other goat (v. 10). Now he was free to go into the land of forgetfulness, where their "sins and iniquities are remembered no more" (Isa. 43. 25. Jer. 31. 34). The scapegoat goes forth to 'Azazel, all enemies thus personified (Heb. 2. 14), proclaiming, "Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. 8. 33, 34). Not in fear of death, but saying, "Who dares to kill me?"

It is the lesson, over again, of the "two birds" in ch. 14. 51-53, applied to the whole nation. It is a type of those who are "risen with Christ" (Col. 3. 1), i.e. made alive again in His resurrection life.

Tradition treats this second goat as loaded with sin and sent out to destruction; whereas "all" is "atoned" for and is therefore "forgiven" and liberty enjoyed before it was sent away."

In this author's readings he has found that The *apompaaios* (sent-away one, scapegoat) is viewed by Cyril of Alexandria (c376-444AD) as a precursor to Christ. But Origen (c185-253AD) links Azazel to Satan (*Contra Celsum*, vi. 43).

Similarly, according to Adventist doctrine, Azazel, the scapegoat, represents Satan. According to certain interpretations, it foreshadows the ultimate judgement, which will eradicate sin from the universe forever. Although Christians' sins are forgiven via Jesus' suffering, the knowledge that sins were committed and need to be placed on the originator, is an interpretation of the ritual.<sup>2</sup>

## Satan's fall and separation from God

The fate of Azazel ties in with the fall of Day Star (translated as Lucifer).

Note what Isaiah wrote about Satan's fall:

"How you are fallen from heaven,  
O Day Star, son of Dawn!" (ESV)

Christ seems to be referring to the same event, but calling him Satan (Adversary) instead:

"And he said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."" (Luke 10:18, ESV)

The bright day star fell with his brilliance to the earth – cast out from the presence of the Most High.

It is this fallen Day Star (translated *Lucifer* in the KJV) who is portrayed as the scapegoat or Azazel in Leviticus 16. Some believe that this goat portrays Christ, but this cannot be the case for the following reasons:

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<sup>2</sup> Even John Milton (1608-74AD), in his *Paradise Lost*, Book I, links Azazel to Satan:

"Then [Satan] commands that ... be upreard  
His mighty Standard; that proud honour claim'd  
AZAZEL as his right, a Cherube tall:  
Who forthwith from the glittering Staff unfurld  
Th' Imperial Ensign."

- why cast lots if both goats are Christ? That doesn't make sense, unless the goats represented two different beings.
- Azazel did not bear our sins for the purpose of forgiveness – that is something Christ did. But Satan will have the blame for sins placed on him as he is the originator or cause of sin that has plagued mankind. After all, Satan is ultimately to blame because he augmented sin, the God allowed it. That is the meaning of “bear” in this context.
- this Azazel did not have its blood shed but Christ shed His blood for us.
- Christ died for us, but the Azazel didn't but rather was left to wander around the desert (cp Jude 13 which is likened to an undesirable place where evil dwells: Ps 68:6; Is 13:21; 34:14; Matt 12:43; Luke 8:27; 11:24; Rev 18:2. Jewish tradition has Azazel being thrown off a cliff by a strong or capable man or Levite. Cp Lev 16:20-22, 26; Rev 20:1-3 with Matt 25:41).
- the Azazel was exiled to an uninhabited area and did not return, unlike Christ who was not exiled to the wilderness to bear our sins there but led there by the spirit, to fast for 40 days and to be tempted by Satan – and then he returned. Not to bear our sins at that time, but rather at His crucifixion. Bearing our sins does not imply guilt, but as if he was a sin offering (IPet 2:24; Eph 5:2; John 1:29; Heb 9:26-28; Is 53:4, 6, 11-12) because we are separated from God (Is 59:1-2). In no sense did He die a sinner; nor did He absorb our sins. Rather, He took our place as a sacrifice for our sins.

## Graded Separation from God

In this regard, Peter Jenson's technical and scholarly work *Graded Holiness* is helpful.

His book investigates the religious system commencing with Exodus 25. He demonstrates with enormous detail how the laws and institutions under the guidance of the priestly class controlled and guided Israel's religious system.

Jenson delves into the Biblical texts on purity and holiness – a holiness spectrum or grading that is generally overlooked by academics and Bible students.

We know that the rewards of the saints differ in glory (ICor 15:38-41); that some sins are regarded as worse than others and punished accordingly (eg theft vs murder: ie restitution in Ex 22:1-4 vs death penalty in Ex 21:12-14. Note Luke 7:41-43; 10:11-13; 12:47-48). Perhaps even faith and other attributes may be graded. A good article explaining this is *Are some sins worse than others?* Details for the article may be found in the Bibliography.

Holiness is also, likewise, graded.

As such, an understanding of the structure of the Old Testament system of Sabbath, Holy Days, Tabernacle, Priests, Levites, rituals and sacrifices help us to understand more about God, His thinking and typology. There are a number of books discussing typology that one could study for this purpose such as Adar Habershon's *The Study of the Types*.

Jenson's work delves deeply into the worship practices of ancient Israel through the priesthood. Holiness is found to be ritualistic, spatial and personal.



When one studies the tabernacle and the temple, it becomes evident that there are grades of holiness. The holy of holies was the centre of holiness followed by the altar and sacrificial area. The outer areas were not considered holy.

Even among Israelites there was holiness gradation: the high priest, priests, Levites. Overall the Israelites were a holy people or saints, but only in a general sense. Gentiles were considered unclean or profane – something Peter later struggled with and even Paul equated gentiles with sinfulness.

Uncleanness was also considered in degrees. Major uncleanness, for example, was contagious and could infect others. The solution took longer and often involved a ritual by a priest (Lev 15:13-15; 12:1-8).

Minor uncleanness could be touching a person with discharge or a carcass (Lev 11:24-28; 15:7, 18). These were easy to resolve by washing clothes, bathing and a short time period of uncleanness eg “until evening.”

So it was with the spatial dimension of the ritual on the Day of Atonement:

“A second goat was presented at the sanctuary, but instead of being sacrificed, it was driven out into the wilderness. At no other time of the year were these two extreme poles of the spatial dimension of the Holiness Spectrum employed in Priestly rituals ...

“In the text the two goats begin by being indistinguishable ... But by the end of the day they have embraced the extreme reaches of significant space ...

“The extreme polarization in the spatial dimension is closely aligned with a similar one in the personal dimension. The identity and etymology of Azazel have been disputed, but the weight of the evidence seems to point to its identification with a demonic being which dwelt in the wilderness. From an equivalence at the beginning of the ritual, the two goats end up at opposite poles of the Holiness Spectrum, both in the spatial (Holy of Holies – wilderness) and in the personal dimension ...

“... the unique reference to a demon in a legitimate ritual context could be because **Azazel represented the extreme opposite of God's holy presence in the Holy of Holies.** The domain of Azazel is not neutral or undefined space, but imbued with a personal quality which is the mirror opposite to God's presence in his holy sanctuary ... it is perhaps possible to regard Azazel's domain as a coalescence of the demonic, the impure, and the sinful.” (*Graded Holiness*, pp. 201-03) [emphasis mine]

Morales in *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus* provides further support to the view that graded holiness may be a means of interpreting this ritual

“Here we are concerned with this second goat, utilized for what may be called an **elimination** rite.” (p. 178) [emphasis mine]

“... **the wilderness represents the furthest remove from his face and is thus the place of darkness and death.** Now it is of peculiar interest that **the two goats of the Day of Atonement proceed in opposite directions, one journeying into the garden of Eden via its lifeblood and the other away from YHWH, to the wilderness loaded**

**with Israel's sins.** Moreover, as both goats begin together at the doorway of the tent of meeting, their movement may be tracked along an east-west alignment, movements coordinated with the early narratives of Genesis in relation to God's Presence. Here it is worth emphasizing that the goats, as one symbol, stand *for the sake of Israel*: the sacrificed goat conveying Israel favourably into the inner sanctum vicariously, the led-away goat conveying Israel's sins away from the face of God. **Broadly, then, the scapegoat signifies *expulsion*** (from Eden, within the cultic [ie religious system] geography established by the tabernacle)." (p. 180) [emphasis mine]<sup>3</sup>

Also, of great interest is that there appears to be some symbolic linkages to a dark oceanic abyss or blackness of nether gloom that some New Testament authors mention (ie Jude 6<sup>4</sup>; IIPet 2:4. Cp Rev 20:4):

"That the scapegoat carries away Israel's sins in plain enough. The significance of the wilderness as the scapegoat's destination, however, is rarely appreciated. Rudman, a notable exception, understands **the wilderness as analogous to the waters of chaos, a place of non-creation**, so that in removing sin from Israel, the azazel-goat removed chaos from creation ... Upon the summit of the mountain of God the garden of Eden stands as the apogee of life and cosmos; **the wilderness forms the precise antonym and polar opposite: death and chaos.**" (p. 179) (footnote 82: "Note how the wilderness is described in terms of the waters of chaos in Deut. 32:10 (tohu; cf. Gen. 1:2).") [emphasis mine]<sup>5</sup> [cp Jude 6, 13; IIPet 2:17; Matt 25:30]

Furthermore, it is evident that the Garden of Eden contains temple or sanctuary typology. For evidence of this, please refer to Peter Beckman's, *The Garden of Eden an Archetypal Sanctuary*. MA Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary; Tony Reinke's *The Temple of Eden* article (See **Appendix The Temple of Eden**); and Ernest Martin's article *The Temple Symbolism in Genesis* available on the internet.

Returning to the meaning of Azazel, below is some additional information by Jacob Milgrom and it is noteworthy that Roy Gane supports this view:

"for Azazel" (la'azaz'el). The lamed auctoris [authorship] indicates the name of the owner (Cazelles 1949) ... **Finally it could be a name of a demon. This is the dominant view in midrashic literature, dating back to the early postbiblical period** (3 Enoch 4:6; Pirge R. El. 46; cf. Inb Ezra, Ramban).<sup>6</sup> It is supported by (1) the parallel syntactic structures of this verse by which one goat is designated "for the Lord," the other "for Azazel," which implies that Azazel is the personal name of a divine being (2) The

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<sup>3</sup> Ralph Levy's paper *The Day of Atonement and the Azazel Goat* explores the Jewish traditions relating to this goat and is worth a read.

<sup>4</sup> Interestingly, Jude seems to have a maritime theme imbedded within it which adds meaning to the 'nether gloom' or 'gloomy darkness' which represents the deep oceanic abysses, where no light enters.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary* on Deut 32:10: "God's fatherly care of Israel. **In the desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness**; literally, *in the land of the desert, in the waste* (the formless waste; the word used is that rendered, Gen 1:2, "without form"), *the howling of the wilderness*. "Israel is figuratively represented as a man without food or water, and surrounded by howling, ferocious beasts, and who must needs have perished had not God found him and rescued him" (Herxheimer)." [emphasis mine]

<sup>6</sup> Please note that although various researchers and groups may refer to Jewish tradition identifying the Azazel goat with Satan or a demon, they do not claim that this is the origin of basis for their view. Rather that these sources are of use to back up what they believe to be the Biblical view. One can say that of just about any doctrine – one can use extra-biblical sources for this purpose.



wilderness to which the goat is dispatched (vv 10,22) is the habitation of demons (e.g. Isa 13:21; 34:14 ...) (Leviticus 1-16. *The Anchor Bible*, p. 1020). [emphasis mine]<sup>7</sup>

"We already know that the live goat for Azazel serves as a ritual "garbage truck" to haul nonmaterial faults away as if they were material refuse. We also know that this ritual is not a sacrifice, not because of the absence of slaughter, but because the animal is not offered to the Lord for his utilization. To the contrary it goes away from him. It is true that 16:5 speaks of the slain and live goats as *hatta't* animals, but with the latter this term simply means (nonsacrificial) "purification ritual" rather than the usual (sacrificial) "purification offering." This usage reflects the fact that both goats play roles in purification from evil, one through sacrifice and the other through an elimination process.

"The live goat is owned by "Azazel." In 16:8-10 the syntax of *lyhwh* ("to/for the LORD") and *la'aza'zel* (to/for Azazel") is: preposition l + proper name, as on ancient Israelite seals that identify objects as belonging to individuals. In *lyhwh* the preposition clearly carries a possessive meaning. The sacrificial goat offered to God "belongs to the LORD." **So the parallel *la'aza'zel* must mean "belongs to Azazel."** **Since "Azazel" is capable of ownership and his name is placed alongside that of the Lord, he must be a supernatural being other than the Lord.** Since the Lord allows sacrifices only to himself (e.g., 17:7), he would not permit the Israelites to send a goat to Azazel as a sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

"Already we can cut through the fat of mistaken theories. Once we know that *la'aza'zel* is the proper name "Azazel," referring to a personal being other than the Lord, we automatically rule out the notion that it is a place. Because Azazel is the owner of the goat, we also rule out the traditional mistranslation of *'aza'zel* as "scapegoat," that is, the goat that goes away or escapes." (*Leviticus/Numbers. NIV Application Commentary*, pp. 288-89). [emphasis mine]<sup>9</sup>

One specialist holds to the view that the two goats are in contrast and do not portray or symbolize two aspects of Christ's sacrifice:

"... but since the phrase "for Azazel" occurs in parallel to "for Yahweh" ("for the Lord"), the wording suggests that two divine figures are being contrasted by the two goats...

It is important to note that this goat was not a sacrifice—it was not sent into the wilderness as an act of sacrifice to a foreign god or demon. Rather, the act of sending the live goat out into the wilderness—unholy ground—was to send the sins of the people where they belonged—the demonic domain. By contrasting purified access to the true God of the first goat with the goat sent to the domain of demons, the identity of the true God and his mercy and holiness was visually reinforced." (Michael Heiser, *The Day of Atonement in Leviticus 16: A Goat for Azazel*, p. 2).

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<sup>7</sup> Many scholars have found ancient Jewish traditions that reflect on the meaning and personage of Azazel. Lester Grabbe points to a number of parallels between the Asael narrative in 1 *Enoch* and the wording of Leviticus 16, including "the similarity of the names Asael and Azazel; the punishment in the desert; the placing of sin on Asael/Azazel; the resultant healing of the land" ("The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, Vol. 18 (1987), p. 155). Lester Grabbe points to another important piece of evidence – a fragmentary text from the *Book of Giant* found at Qumran (4Q203). In this document the punishment for all the sins of the fallen angels is placed on Azazel.

<sup>8</sup> Some interesting information is available online here <https://www.thetorah.com/article/is-azazel-a-goat-place-demon-or-deity>

<sup>9</sup> Whether the goat represented Azazel or was sent to the place of Azazel, continues to be debated by scholars. See for example J M Sprinkle, *The Laws of Clean and Unclean and their Relationship with the Concept of Sacred Space*, 1999, p. 12.

Notice also that the man who releases the Azazel goat into the wilderness has to both bathe his body and wash his clothes in water after which he is permitted back into the camp (Lev 16:20-22, 26). This is because touching it imposes uncleanness upon the man who undertakes this extremely important task. If the Azazel goat represented Christ, he would not need to undertake this ritual (Lev 15 applies).<sup>10</sup>

That Azazel is a wicked being is proven by the above arguments.

## The Culpability of the Azazel Goat

A further lengthy quote from Gane is warranted to demonstrate that the cause and source of sin is Satan pictured by the Azazel goat:

"Mediatorial bearing...

"In what way did the priestly activity of eating the meat serve the goal of expiation. Three pieces of evidence help us with this. (1) Whether a purification offering to remedy moral fault was to be eaten or not made no difference to the overall goal of the ritual: to expiate (*kipper*) evil from the offerer(s), prerequisite to divine forgiveness (e.g., eaten type: 4:26, 31, 35; incinerated type: 4:20). So what difference did it make whether a priest ate from the sacrifice? He was only permitted to eat a purification offering that he officiated if it was for the benefit of someone else, that is, if he was acting purely in a mediatorial capacity. If he were the offerer or included in a group, he could not eat it (4:3-12, 13-21; 9:9-11).

(2) A mediator for another Israelite, the priest received part of the person's purification offering by eating it, just as the Lord received the suet/fat of the same sacrifice on his altar (cf. 4:26, 31, 35). **So there is a close parallel between the role of the priest and that of the Lord.**

In 10:17 the priests must eat purification offering meat to accomplish two goals, which would apply to this kind of sacrifice to remedy moral fault but not physical impurity:

to bear the culpability of the community

to expiate on their behalf before the Lord

The parallel syntax here indicates that bearing (*ns'*) the peoples' culpability (*'wn*) and expiating for them before the Lord mean basically the same thing.

Ex 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

Lev 5:1 And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and *is* a witness, whether he hath seen or known *of it*; if he do not utter *it*, then he shall bear his iniquity.

So by participating with God in receiving purification offerings, the priests expiated for the people as the Lord does: He bears culpability (*ns'* *'wn*) when he frees wrongdoers from the consequences of their sins (Ex 34:7), which they would otherwise continue to bear (cf. Lev 5:1).

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<sup>10</sup> F. F. Bruce in *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, *New International Commentary on the New Testament* makes this interesting statement "The heavenly realm may be envisaged as comprising a succession of levels, with the throne of God on the highest of these and the hostile forces occupying the lowest. The level which they occupy is probably identical with "the domain of the air," ruled (according to Eph, 2:2) by "the spirit which now operates in the disobedient." At any rate, these are real forces of evil which are encountered in the spiritual sphere..." (p. 406). So, once again, the concept of *graded holiness* appears in the Scriptures with lessons we can all learn from.

A final question is: What happened to the priests as a result of bearing the culpability of the people? Schwartz shows that elsewhere the expression *ns'* *'wn* metaphorically refers to legal guilt in terms of carrying sin, with the offense viewed as an object to be hauled around as a burden. In context of persons bearing their own sin, *'wn* (usually translated "iniquity") is "culpability," which means that they deserve and may suffer consequences.

Nu 30:15 But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity.

Ex 28:38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

In some passages people bear the culpability (*'wn*) of others. A man who nullifies his wife's vow, except when he first hears about it, bears her culpability, that is, the blame she would otherwise bear for breaking her vow (Num 30:15). In Leviticus 10:17 priests who perform priestly mediation for laypeople through purification offerings bear their culpability. K. Koch explains: "Part of the task of priests and Levites, however, is to remove *'awon* from Israel from the sanctuary itself, to 'bear' that *awon* representatively and by virtue of their own inherent quality to render it harmless (Ex 28:38; Lev 10:17; Num 18:1, 23)."

By "their own inherent quality," Koch refers to the divine holiness conferred on the priests at their consecration. **So the culpability remains on the priests at their consecration, who are immune to its consequences. Then Koch suggests that on the day of Atonement the high priests transfers the culpability born of the priests to Azazel's goat (Lev 16:21). This makes good sense because the goat bears all the culpabilities (*ns'* + plural of *'wn*) of the Israelites into the desert (16:22).**" (ibid, pp. 194-197).

It does make good sense that sin is placed on Satan's head who is ultimately culpable for causing and encouraging sin. He is the very source of sin.

Reference should also be made to the Jewish tradition that the Azazel goat was thrown over a cliff. Further information is available from a number of sources such as:

**"Scapegoat was to be taken down the Valley of Hinnom to a place about three miles east and south of Jerusalem called Beth Chaduda where the goat was allowed to go over a very deep cliff (like an abyss) so that he would never come in contact with civilization again** (Yoma 67b; Targum Jerusalem Leviticus 14:10). This part of the wilderness was where the demons were supposed to be. It was near this region where Christ was tempted of the Devil (Matthew 4:1–11). The place was a part of the drainage system of the Wady en-Nar—the extension of Gehenna, the Streambed of Fire. From this area, the Streambed of Fire ran directly eastwards into the Dead Sea (the Lake of the Fire). This region between Beth Chaduda and the Dead Sea contained the abyss mentioned in the Book of Revelation. It will be a place of temporary confinement of Satan and his angelic powers for the Millennium." (<https://thecenacle.weebly.com/where-is-hell.html>) [emphasis mine]<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Even the book of Enoch, containing many Jewish traditions, states: "And I asked the angel of peace who went with me, saying: 'For whom are these **chains** being prepared?' And he said unto me: 'These are being prepared for the hosts of Azazel, so that they may take them and **cast them into the abyss** of complete condemnation.'" (1 Enoch 54:4-5). Andrei Orlov in his notes: "One unique and significant aspect of Azazel's role in the Slavonic Apocalypse is his ruling power over the lower realm. In the Enochic tradition, Asael is more subdued: he is a demoted being, bound and incarcerated in the abyss where he awaits final judgment. There he is deprived of any meaningful action and is covered with darkness." (*Azazel as an Eschatological Scapegoat in the Apocalypse of Abraham* [Azazel as an Eschatological Scapegoat in the Apocalypse of Abraham – Jewish Roots of Christian Mysticism](#)).

This fits well with Rev 20:1-3. It is important for Satan being put out of the way to permit the Millennium to succeed as typology and Feast Days picture.<sup>12</sup>

Further insights are offered by Angel Rodriguez in his article "Leviticus 16: Its Literary Structure," *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, Autumn 1996, pp. 269-86.

The academic article is available online and well worth a read. In the article he produces argument from the structure of Leviticus 16 (ie it is divided up into its historical setting, first development, second development, concluding ritual acts, institutionalizing of the ritual and concluding remark).

Of special interest is the chiasm that is formed within the chapter and the parallelisms. These inform us of the identity of Azazel and its culpability for sin, rather than Christ's sacrifice for our sins (IPet 2:24; Heb 9:28; Is 53:5-6, 11-12) while the Azazel goat was not a sacrifice.

Some insightful extracts from Rodriguez's article:

"One [goat] is approaching the Lord, while the other is distancing or, better, **being separated permanently from the Lord.**" (pp. 273-74) [emphasis mine]

This must surely tell us that this Azazel does not and cannot represent Christ. Note his further statements:

"The parallelism suggest that they are both personal beings. They move in different spheres, which seem to be opposite to each other. **Yahweh dwells with his people, but Azazel is located away from the Israelite camp, in the wilderness.** Nothing more is said about the enigmatic figure of **Azazel, but one senses that it is a negative power.**" (p. 275) [emphasis mine]

"The goat is "to be sent to the wilderness," an expression that implies the performance of an *elimination rite.*" (p. 275)

"One seems to be going beyond the evidence when applying the term "sacrifice," in the Levitical sense, to the goat for Azazel. This is not a cleansing rite but an elimination rite." (p. 275, footnote)

The quote below is a clincher concerning the Azazel goat:

"... the description of the goat bearing iniquity upon itself to the barren land ... transfer and removal, belong to the very essence of the elimination rite. Sending the goat to the wilderness brings the elimination rite to a close and **signifies that the sins**

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<sup>12</sup> "Although there is no explicit reference to the scapegoat ceremony, Rev. 20, 1-3,10 has clear connections with I Enoch 10, 4-5. Note the common features: Asael is bound prior to the judgment just as is Satan. (This binding seems to include chains, according to I Enoch 54, 3-5, though the exact date of the Parables is disputed). Just as Satan is cast into the abyss, so are Asael and others ... Thus, the punishment of Satan has been assimilated to the Asael tradition of 1 Enoch... Revelation 20 seems to have a Jewish tradition behind it. To many Jews of the time, the binding of Satan before the messianic age was likely to evoke jubilee symbolism and with it the whole complex associated with the Day of Atonement." (Lester Grabbe, "The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, Vol. 18, No. 2, Jan 1987, pp. 160-61)

of the people, which had been purged from the sanctuary, are being sent to their source of origin." (p. 280) [emphasis mine]

"In its present form Lev 16 combines, in a very well-balanced conceptual symmetry, the *rite of entrance*, the *cleansing rite* performed with the two sin-offerings, and the *elimination rite* ... the *elimination rite* the goat for Azazel takes them away to their place of origin, to the wilderness." (p. 285)

"... the cause of the impurity, is removed through the goat for Azazel." (p. 285, footnote)

## Holy Day Typology in Revelation proves Azazel is Satan

However, for me, one of the clinches in proving this point is that the Feast days form a sort of 'template' for the book of Revelation – note the part in red below regarding the Day of Atonement contained within the Holy Feast Day/Book of Revelation Parallels:

| Chapter       | Prophecy/Event  | Holy Feast Day                          |
|---------------|---|---|
| 1             | Introduction – Christ the Lamb of God                           | Passover                                |
| 2-3           | Seven Churches – sin in spiritual Israel and examining the self | Seven Days of Unleavened Bread          |
| 4-5           | Christ the Lamb, Redeemer, worthy to open the scroll            | Sheaf of the Firstfruits during the DUB |
| 6 – 8:6       | Seven Seals of the Scroll                                       | Pentecost                               |
| 7:4,9; 14:4   | Two Wave Loaves and Two Multitudes – Israel and the Gentiles    | Pentecost                               |
| 8 - 9         | Seven Trumpets  | Trumpets                                |
| 10-12         | INSET   |   |
| 13 – 19       | Great Tribulation & Day of the Lord                             | Trumpets                                |
| <b>20:1-3</b> | <b>Satan bound</b>  | <b>Atonement</b>                        |
| 20:4-6        | Millennial reign of the Messiah                                 | Tabernacles                             |
| 20:7-15       | Judgment  | Last Great Day                          |

(The above chart I assembled is based on the information contained in David Hill's booklet on *The Correlation between the Holy Days and the Book of Revelation* and other sources)

The holy day 'template' in the book of Revelation provides further demonstration that the Azazel goat is typological of Satan and not of Christ.

Further parallels that prove that Azazel represents Satan are found in **Appendix. Cain and Abel Parallels** and the **Appendix. Barabbas the Scapegoat?**

## Final Remarks

From the above arguments we can see that Azazel cannot represent Christ. While there is so much well researched information and well-meaning articles available for both viewpoints, perhaps the

summary by Dr Sam Bacchiocchi (deceased) which is available in chapter 4 of his book *God's Festivals in Scripture and History. Part II: The Fall Festivals* is one of the better writings on the subject.

Another article well worth a read is *Who does the Azazel Goat represent?* by Paul Syltie. Refer also to Charles Feinberg's article on "The Scapegoat of Leviticus Sixteen," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. 115 (1958), pp. 320-33 for a detailed, scholarly look into the issues involved with the interpretation of who Azazel is.

The question arises whether the meaning of the Day is restricted only to the beginning of the Millennium. Like all the holy days, it does not refer to a single event but can be re-occurring or extended or overlap with other events and holy days. As such the ultimate fulfilment can be continuous, occurring when Satan is finally dealt with after the Millennium as well.

It is important to realise that sin continues through the Millennium due to human nature and the previous imprint of Satan's attitude upon mankind. People will make decisions, even bad ones; people are born with both positive and negative attributes they have inherited. Anything that falls short of the glory of God is sin. Thus, the influence of Satan continues with declining influence during the 1,000 years which the 70 bull offerings demonstrates (see my article *Feast of the Nations*). Satan's lingering influence is to blame – he doesn't have to directly influence or be around to be the source of sin.

From the above we can see that Atonement does represent Satan's role in God's Plan and thus in this context Satan and not Christ, is represented by the Azazel goat. Because Satan is the source of sin and therefore culpable.



## Appendix. Cain and Abel Parallels

Excerpts from A. Orlov, *The Atoning Dyad: The Two Goats of Yom Kippur in the Apocalypse of Abraham* (*Studia Judaica*, 8; Leiden: Brill, 2016).<sup>13</sup>

"This banishment through non-election of one of the brothers, therefore, is reminiscent of the go-away goat's exile" (p. 9)

He quotes from Barth (*Church Dogmatics*, 11-2.360):

"the second goat is also "placed before the Lord," that the treatment meted out to him and the tragic record of his unusability also form an integral part of the sign and testimony set up on the Day of Atonement ..."

Footnote 17 he quotes Barth again:

"bear it away before all eyes to the place where it belongs, and where it is its own punishment, far from the community, into the wretchedness of the wilderness. **Incapable of purification ... Useful only for a life that is no life at all! That is the sentence which is pronounced upon the second goat, and which is carried out by his banishment.** It is the image of the non-elect as they (Cain, Ishmael, Esau) stand apart from the elect ..."

"one cultic animal was banished into the wilderness, while the other goat was brought into the Holy of Holies." (p. 10)

Concerning Cain and Abel:

**"one of these offerings is accepted by God, while the other is rejected.** It might allude to the nature of the two goats as two distinctive offerings—one of which was predestined "for the Lord," and the other "for Azazel."" (p. 11).

"If Abel is indeed, as suggested by some interpreters, representative of the goat for YHWH in this story, the reference to his blood is noteworthy" because the blood of the goat was actually brought before God in the Holy of Holies and of interest is that Abel's blood is so important to God that he mentions that it is, symbolically, "crying out"." (p. 12)

He goes on to query whether Abel's blood is related to those of sacrifices poured on the ground such as in Deut 15:23 (p. 13).

**Conversely, Cain may be portraying one who is the bearer of sin (Gen 4:13) and was cursed (v. 11)** which may find its parallel in Lev 16:21 (p. 15).

"The destination of Cain's exile "away from the divine presence ... in the land of Nod" is reminiscent of the antagonistic movement of the go-away goat" ... the land of Nod came to be understood as opposed to the paradisaical location ... the wilderness" (pp. 17-18). In footnote 43 it is mentioned that the land of Nod is the desert – the joyless land. [Emphasis mine]

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<sup>13</sup> See also Andrei Orlov, "Eschatological Yom Kippur of the Apocalypse of Abraham: Part I. The Scapegoat Ritual," *Scriniium V Symbola Caelestis*, 2009, pp. 79-111.

## Appendix. Barabbas the Scapegoat?

An extensive work on this is found with the pages of *The Gospels Through Old Testament Eyes* by Nicholas P. Nunn, chapter 23 (pp. 188-04). He brings out many aspects and nuances that the average person would overlook. It is a must read. Another is below.

### ***Barabbas the Scapegoat? Pilgrim's Light***

**29 April 2012.**

Today's reading in Leviticus 16:1-24 describes the offerings for the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). One of the most interesting features of this day's sacrifices is the offering of two goats; one for the Lord, and one for Azazel.

Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the LORD at the entrance of the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats, one lot for the LORD and the other lot for Azazel. And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the LORD and use it as a sin offering, but the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the LORD to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel. -Leviticus 16:8-10 (ESV)

The word 'Azazel' is translated 'scapegoat' in most versions. However it was understood that Azazel is the accusing angel that stands before the LORD accusing God's people of infractions of the Law. Other names for him are Satan, HaSatan, and the Adversary. These two goats were to look identical. Some have argued that Jesus could not have been an atonement for sin because he was crucified on Passover and not on the Day of Atonement. The interesting thing is that there are many elements of the sacrifices for the Day of Atonement that take place when Jesus is crucified. One of them is taken right from this passage of Scripture. So let's take a look at some parallels between what God instructed Moses and Aaron in Leviticus and what happened when Pilate presented Jesus and Barabbas in front of the crowd before his crucifixion.

Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them.

And he answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?"

For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead.

And Pilate again said to them, "Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?"

And they cried out again, "Crucify him."

And Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has he done?"

But they shouted all the more, "Crucify him."

So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. -Mark 15:6-15 (ESV)

We see that Barabbas was arrested for insurrection and murder. Many assume that makes Him a criminal in the minds of the crowd and that they chose a criminal and a murderer over Jesus. It is true that Barabbas was a criminal in the eyes of Rome. However, anyone starting an insurrection against Rome would have been considered a hero to the Jews. **In fact there could have been some in the crowd that thought Barabbas was the true Messiah and that Jesus was not.** Others thought Jesus was the Messiah and Barabbas was not, but those who would have called for Jesus must not have been well represented in the crowd. Some may have even mistook Barabbas for Jesus. So why all the confusion?

Barabbas and Jesus were serving identical functions. They were both working to save Israel. Many Jews believed that the Messiah would deliver them from Rome. Barabbas was working to do just that. He was a good candidate for Messiah according to the leadership in Jerusalem. Not only that but the first name of Barabbas could very well have been Jesus. In these ancient witnesses he was called Jesus Bar Abbas: the Syriac manuscripts of Matthew, the Caesarean group of texts, the Sinaitic palimpsest, and manuscripts used by Origen. If this is true then you have two men named Jesus both candidates for the role of Messiah. Or two identical goats as used for the Day of Atonement.

There is even another interesting connection. **The name Barabbas is made of two Hebrew words: 'Bar' which means 'son' and 'Abba' which means 'father'. So Barabbas means 'Son of the Father'.** Jesus called God his Father and taught his disciples to pray to the Father. This connection is so strong that some scholars believe that Jesus and Barabbas are in fact the same person. It is also interesting to note that Barabbas sounds close to Bar-Rabbis which would mean be 'Son of the Rabbis' which is an interesting play on words because the chief leaders and rabbis in Jerusalem favored Barabbas over Jesus of Nazareth.

So we have two identical men standing before the people. They are given the option to choose between the two. It was the High Priest that would cast lots to choose the goat for the LORD and the goat for Azazel. It was the chief priests (presumably led by the High Priest) that stirred up the crowd to let Barabbas go. They took a chance to have their choice released and they got their wish.

**What follows is that Jesus was chosen to be crucified, and Barabbas was chosen to be freed.** Even though this happens at Passover the overtones relating to the Day of Atonement point to Jesus as being represented as the atoning sacrifice for sin. We know that both goats were killed; one was sacrificed in the manner prescribed by God, and the other was driven off a cliff and dashed on the rocks below. We see that this was attempted with Jesus after he taught at the synagogue in Nazareth:

And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. - Luke4:29 (ESV)

Jesus was not driven off the cliff that day, and he wasn't chosen to be freed on the day of his crucifixion. He was chosen to be a sacrifice before the LORD and to save mankind from sin. **Barabbas was freed like the scapegoat.** [Emphasis mine]

## Appendix. The Temple of Eden

By Tony Reinke

12 October 2009

In his book *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (IVP/Apollos, 2004), G. K. Beale argues that the Garden of Eden was the "first archetypal temple." He provides 14 conceptual and linguistic parallels between Eden and future tabernacle/temple structures. My brief summary:

**1. The Garden as the unique place of God's presence.** Eden was the place where God walked back and forth with man, paralleled this with later references to the Tabernacle (Gen. 3:8 with Lev. 26:12, Deut. 23:14; 2 Sam. 7:6–7).

**2. The Garden as the place of the first priest.** Adam was placed in the garden to "cultivate and keep it" (Gen. 2:15). Taken alone, "cultivation" has obvious agricultural meaning. But this pair of terms ("cultivate/keep" also translated "serve/guard") is used elsewhere in the OT to describe the work of the priest (Num. 3:7–8; 8:25–26; 18:5–6; 1 Chr. 23:32; Ezek. 44:14). Thus "the task of Adam in Genesis 2:15 included more than mere spadework in the dirt of a garden. It is apparently that priestly obligations in Israel's later temple included the duty of 'guarding' unclean things from entering (cf. Num. 3:6–7, 32, 38; 18:1–7), and this appears to be relevant for Adam, especially in view of the unclean creature lurking on the perimeter of the Garden and who then enters" (p. 69).

**3. The Garden as the place of the first guarding cherubim.** After sin was introduced into the garden, Adam and Eve are barred from the tree of life by cherubim. This reveals that Adam's work included more than gardening—he was to protect the garden from evil and uncleanness. (Gen. 3:24 with Ex. 25:18–22; 1 Kgs. 6:29–35, 8:6–7; Ezek. 28:14–16, 41:18).

**4. The Garden as the place of the first arboreal lampstand.** Likely, the Tree of Life provides the model for the lampstand placed directly outside the holy of holies (Ex. 25:31–36).

**5. The Garden as formative for garden imagery in Israel's temple.** Temple references in the OT possess botanical, garden-like features (1 Kgs. 6:18, 29, 32; 7:20–26, 42, 47; Zech. 1:8–11; Ps. 74:3–7; 52:8; 92:13–15; Lam. 2:6; Isa. 60:13, 21).

**6. Eden as the first source of water.** Like Eden, the eschatological temples feature a source of water (Gen. 2:10 with Ezek. 47:1–12; Rev. 21:1–2).

**7. The Garden as the place of precious stones.** Note the correlation between precious stones in Eden and the building materials of the later tabernacle and temple (Gen. 2:12 with 1 Kgs. 6:20–22, Ex. 25:7, 11–39; 28:6–27; 1 Chr. 29:2).

**8. The Garden as the place of the first mountain.** Eden was situated upon a mountain (Ezek. 28:14, 16) just like Mount Zion (Ex. 15:17) and the eschatological temple (Ezek. 40:2; 43:12; Rev. 21:10).

**9. The Garden as the first place of wisdom.** "The ark in the holy of holies, which contained the Law (that led to wisdom) echoes the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (that also led to wisdom). Both the touching of the ark and the partaking of the tree's fruit resulted in death" (pp. 73–74).

**10. The Garden as the first place with an eastern facing entrance.** Like the future tabernacle and temples, Eden was entered from the east (Gen. 3:24 with Ezek. 40:6).

**11. The Garden as part of a tripartite sacred structure.** Genesis 2:10 reveals that "a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden." This reference formally distinguishes Eden from the garden. From this Beale builds the case that Eden and its adjoining garden "formed two distinct regions" (p. 74). He sees here tripartite degrees of holiness, similar to the temple complex, comprised of (a) the region outside the garden (the outer court); (b) the garden representing a sacred place (the holy place); and (c) Eden, where God dwells (the holy of holies).

**12. Ezekiel's view of the Garden of Eden as the first sanctuary.** In Ezekiel 28:13–18, the prophet draws a number of parallels between Eden and Israel's tabernacle/temple. Specifically, the prophet references Eden as a sanctuary and pictures Adam dressed as a priest (v. 13). And "Ezekiel 28:18 is probably, therefore, the most explicit place anywhere in canonical literature where the Garden of Eden is called a temple" (pp. 75-76).

**13. The Ancient Near Eastern concept of temples in association with garden-like features.** "Gardens not untypically were part of temple complexes in the Ancient Near East" (p. 76).

**14. Early Judaism's view of the garden as the first sanctuary.** Beale provides evidence from the non-canonical Jewish literature to further prove that "Judaism in various ways also understood the Garden to be the first sanctuary in line with the above Old Testament evidence" (p. 27).

**Conclusion:** "The cumulative effect of the preceding parallels between the Garden of Genesis 2 and Israel's tabernacle and temple indicates that Eden was the first archetypal temple, upon which all of Israel's temples were based" (pp. 79-80).

Read more on these conceptual and linguistic parallels on pages 66–80 of Beale's *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (IVP/Apollos, 2004).

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## ***Notes on Azazel's Culpability and Separation from God***

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[www.friendsofsabbath.org](http://www.friendsofsabbath.org)  
[hrp11@iprimus.com.au](mailto:hrp11@iprimus.com.au)

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