

# The Ritual of the “Scapegoat”

(Leviticus 16:20-22)



- What is a "scapegoat" and what is the origin of that word?
- The most common definition of a scapegoat today is a person or thing blamed for misdeeds of others, akin to being a fall-guy or being thrown under the bus. That person may or may not be guilty.
- According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, **scapegoat means "one that bears the blame for others."**
- But the idea of the scapegoat is originally a Biblical one derived from a ceremony recorded in Leviticus 16.
- The English word *scapegoat* was invented by William Tyndale in his 1530 English translation of the Bible, when he translated the Hebrew word "Azazel", which means "the goat of departure"—or the goat of escape.
- Azazel is a combination of the Hebrew word for goat (az) and the Hebrew word for to carry or to take away, or escape (azel).
- This is the basis for the translation of the word Azazel as scapegoat—literally, the goat who would carry away the sin of Israel, the "tote-goat."
- That seemed like a good translation to Tyndale because in the ceremony of the Yom Kippur ritual of animal sacrifice the goat is indeed released in the wilderness.
- The King James version has followed his lead, as have many modern translations since.

- The meaning of “the scapegoat” in Leviticus 16, which is the only occurrence of this word in the Bible, is thus "a goat upon whose head are symbolically placed the sins of the nation after which it is sent into the wilderness in the biblical ceremony for Yom Kippur" (the Day of Atonement).
- The scapegoat thus visually and ritually cleansed the nation from the guilt of their sins.
- A good suggestion for the best translation of Azazel is "banished goat", since the scapegoat was not intended to "escape" but instead to be cast out into an uninhabited wilderness to be "gone" forever from the people. The scapegoat was to "go away completely" or "go away forever."
- It is noteworthy that the original Hebrew word *azazel* has no implication of bearing blame; rather, the *azazel* is simply a goat of departure.
- The ceremony where God personally identifies this goat delivers some of the most profound lessons we can learn about the Day of Atonement—and identifies the *azazel* for what he is

- In Leviticus chapter 16, we are told both the purpose for the Day of Atonement and the important details of what God expected to be done on this day.
- This extraordinarily rich passage tells us clearly and dramatically in verse 30 that the purpose of this holiday was for cleansing and purification.
- “For on this day [Yom Kippur] shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins.”
- This chapter is full of Christ in his most precious death for men. Its various aspects are set forth under the diverse sacrifices, as light is reflected from the many facets of a diamond.
- Leviticus, chapter 16 foreshadows how God would provide a once-and-for-all scapegoat who suffered and died a horrific death on a wooden cross.
- He has already taken the blame for all of our wrongdoing, so we should acknowledge him as God’s scapegoat for us, as well as the one responsible for the atonement for our sins.

- In ancient Israel, God commanded that a special ceremony should take place on the Day of Atonement.
- The Day of Atonement was perhaps the most holy day in the Jewish calendar, and the only day in the year when the high priest entered into the holy of holies of the tabernacle to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the nation.
- the Day of Atonement was the annual feast at which Israel gathered; and, despite all of these other sacrifices that we've learned about (and rituals that we've learned about) in Leviticus 1-15, **The account in Leviticus 16 describes the foreshadow of things to come, the substance is Jesus, and so the real significance of this event is commented upon in great detail in Hebrews 9 & 10.**

- The second purpose of Yom Kippur is just as important, but easily missed. This ritual was designed to help bring God's people into communion with Him- for them to be "before the Lord."
- Here is where we find the Bible making a significant break from other religious traditions.
- Rather than having a God that simply needs to be appeased, the God of the Bible wants us to be cleansed from our sin, because He wants for us to be with Him. God requires cleansing for the purpose of relationship. For impurity is not something God permits in His presence.
- Much like a parent welcoming home a hot, sweaty and dirty child after a summer's day at the park, God wants us to be clean because He wants to enjoy our company.
- And so, He says to us much the same thing a parent would say to that child—go wash up before you come to the table to eat because I want a person who is clean at my table.
- This all-encompassing sin offering was therefore offered up not only for the high priest, not only for the other priests of his household, but for the whole of Israel, because to draw near to a holy God required the covering of sin.
- The Day of Atonement foreshadowed and anticipated a greater, permanent cleansing of God's people and of His dwelling place, which was to be accomplished by a better priest, who would offer a better sacrifice.

- **This passage beautifully points to the fact that Jesus purchases forgiveness and cleansing for His people so that we may be a sanctuary, and so that the fulfillment of all the promises of God that “[He] will be our God, and we will be His people, and the tabernacle of God will be among men, and He will dwell in our midst” will be realized.**
- **Though sin is not welcome in God’s presence, sinners are, because Jesus died for sinners.**

**Two goats were required in the ritual on the Day of Atonement.**



**WHY TWO GOATS?**

- **Two goats were necessary to adequately present the type given in Leviticus 16. Since both goats were substituted for the people, both goats represent Christ. Christ was both the scapegoat and the one chosen to be "for Jehovah, " as the slain sacrificial goat.**
- **Both of them were needed to present the atonement for sins, and the bearing away of mankind's sins. The slain sacrificed goat presents the death of Christ on the cross, to atone and pay for the sins of mankind and the scapegoat demonstrates how Jesus took our sins away.**
- **Each of these goats have a purpose as perfect Old Testament pictures of Jesus Christ , and complimented each other in manifesting the twofold work of redemption by Jesus Christ on the cross—one as a sacrificial offering and the other as a scapegoat.**
- **The slain goat foreshadowed the death of the Messiah, Jesus Christ as he bore the penalty of the sin, as our sin offering. The scapegoat symbolized that our sins were simultaneously borne away.**
- **The two goats used in the ritual represented two aspects of the atonement that God provided; but both animals taught the Israelites that a sinless agent was removing their sins by vicarious atonement.**

- In the biblical tradition of Yom Kippur, God called for two goats—one a sin offering for Himself and one as a vehicle to remove the sins from the nation. The people's sin offering consisted of not one goat, but two.
- So on the day of atonement, two he-goats were brought before the priest for sacrifice. The priest examined these he-goats, and declared their fitness.
- The goats had to be equal in age, color and quality (c.f. Exodus 12:5, 13:2) and be free from defects, not blind, not fractured nor maimed nor having a running sore or eczema or scabs, not overgrown or stunted member, not testicles bruised or crushed or torn or cut (Leviticus 22:20-24).
- Then a lot would be cast for the selections –
- The high priest would cast lots to fix one of the goats for YHWH and another goat for AZAZEL (scapegoat), one to be slain as sacrifice for sin, another to bear the transgressions of the people.
- The one which was identified and chosen by YHWH for scapegoat was sent away from the camp after the priest confessed the sins of the community over its head, and then to be sent away into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26).
- Where could someone be found that is described as having these qualifications.
- Since it is true that “all have sinned, fallen short, turned away, became worthless, no one does good and not even one (Romans 3:10-18), Jesus came into this world to sacrifice himself.
- He himself became the Goat for YHWH and the Scapegoat. Jesus was blameless and was separated for all of us (1 Peter 1:19, John 1:29; 8:46, Hebrews 7:26). These human attributes and the divine attributes are present here as two he-goats.

- **Some think that the *azazel* cannot represent Christ. However, since only Christ suffered for our sins, and took them away, and since there is no known person who is not Christ that had any experience similar to that of the scapegoat, both goats symbolize Christ.**
- **This is why Jesus Christ is represented twice in a single ceremony, as is the case in Leviticus 16.**
- **Although he was not banished there, both Mathew 4 and Luke 4 describes Christ being led into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.**
- **Note too, though, that Jesus Christ *is* also represented in this ceremony twice: first, by the goat which is slain, just as He was, and second, by the high priest.**
- **Let us now delve deeper into the scriptural reasons for having to goats.**

- **Two goats were necessary to adequately present the type given in Leviticus 16, because on the day of atonement we see that sins are dealt with in two ways : through a ritual of blood and ritual of riddance.**
- **The ritual of blood is that atoning ritual, that propitiating ritual, that expiating ritual, the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrificed animals.**
- **In that atoning ritual, blood is offered as payment for sin, as covering for sin, in order to turn away the wrath of God, in order to quit the wrath of God, in order to deflect the wrath of God, the just wrath of God on Israel for her sins.**
- **This blood offering is offered to indicate that there is no forgiveness of sins without the shedding of blood.**
- **And so, sin is dealt with through bloodshed, and these rituals point to this reality.**
- **But the sin is also dealt with through the ritual of riddance, and of course that's seen especially in verses 20-22 in the manifestation of the scapegoat...this scapegoat, upon whom the priest's hand lays all the sins, all the iniquities of Israel, and then sends a man, a chosen man, out into the wilderness.**

- **He no longer makes demands of that kind upon us. He is free to forgive us at any time and to love us.**
- **The second goat represents Christ as bearing the whole weight and load of our sin and guilt away. When our Lord died he went into the wilderness of death like this goat.**
- **The second goat demonstrates that not only does Jesus provide the forgiveness of our sins, but He also provides power over sin, to separate our sins from us.**
- **In one, he is represented as satisfying the heart of God on our behalf and rendering God free to love us without any restraint at all by his justice. God's justice has been satisfied.**
- **The two goats represented two aspects of the work of the cross. It is important to note that the sacrificial goat, and the scapegoat are complementary to one another. The goat that was slain prefigured Christ's death; the scapegoat pointed out his resurrection'.**
- **The slain expressed atonement for sin, as the ground for our justification; the scapegoat shows Christ's victory, and total removal of sin in the sanctification of the soul.**
- **Christ was crucified accepting the sins of the whole world as scapegoat (Leviticus 16:21-22 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-21)**

- **The goat that was slain speaks of satisfaction, expiation and atonement; the scapegoat on whose head the sins of the nation were conferred speaks of substitution, since our sins needed to be removed from God's presence and sent away, because God's justice excludes sin from his presence and sends it away.**
- **This took place ultimately through Christ's Death and Resurrection**
- **We are taught in Romans 4:25 that Jesus was delivered up on the cross because of our offenses, and was raised at the resurrection because of our justification.**
- **The first goat needed to die, because an expiation was in order. To make amends, blood needed to be shed. Because "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." (Hebrews 9:22)**
- **The first goat was a picture *how* atonement is granted: sins are forgiven because punishment has been put on an innocent party.**

# THE SLAIN GOAT

- Let us first consider the goat for the LORD, i.e the goat that was slain. This goat pictures the crucifixion of Jesus.
- The goat that was slain pictured the atonement for sins ; it pictures how atonement is granted: sins are forgiven because punishment has been put on an innocent party.
- **The slain goat- the one for the Lord- signifies the sacrificial death which Christ died, as a sin offering**
- The goat slain represented the judgment on sin that resulted in death necessary for atonement.
- The goat which was “the LORD’s” was sacrificed for the sins of the people, like the bull, and the blood was applied in the same ways.
- The sacrificed goat perished and is a picture or foreshadowing of the fact made clear in the scriptures that Christ suffered for our sins and paid for them in full.
- That is the whole point of the Atonement, and that is a core belief of true Christians. The scriptures proclaim, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows" (Isa 53:4).

- **The goat selected "for Jehovah" i.e that on which the Lord's lot fell was killed, i.e it was sacrificed for a sin offering to atone for the sins of the people, and its blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat (Lev. 16:9, 15-16).**
- **The iniquity and transgressions of all of Israel was placed on this goat, which is a perfect picture of Jesus, of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he declared in Isaiah 53: 6, that "the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." ...and again in Isaiah 53:12 that He "was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors."**
- **Aaron would then intercede on behalf of the Israelites, just as the resurrected Jesus Christ, and the lamb once slain, now sits at God's throne as our High Priest, and intercedes on our behalf (see Hebrews 6:19-20; 7:25-26). Romans**
- **On the day of Atonement, Aaron the high priest represented our High Priest the resurrected Christ, who offered himself as the sacrifice for our sins, and then became our intercessor before the throne of grace. This is why it was so critical that Aaron be purified before officiating over the ceremony.**

- **Paul speaks of this in Romans 3:25, doesn't he? He was a propitiatory sacrifice for us. Through blood sacrifice, Jesus Christ fulfilled the pictures here of Leviticus 16.**
- **The Book of Hebrews, in chapters 9 and 10 reminds us that the blood of bulls and goats cannot forgive sin, only the blood of Jesus Christ.**
- He tells us in Hebrews 9 that Jesus' death was in order to forgive sins that were committed under the first covenant, under the Mosaic covenant. What does that mean? It means that these blood sacrifices did not forgive sin! They pointed forward to the real sacrifice that forgave sin: Jesus' death on the cross on our behalf.
- **This reminds us that if we look anywhere else other than to Jesus and to His cross for the forgiveness of sins, we cannot find forgiveness there?**
- Only at the cross, only in Jesus can we find forgiveness of sins. If even the Old Testament ritual, the ceremonial way that God dealt with the sins of the children of Israel...if it was not effective for the forgiveness of sins, but pointed forward to the one thing that was effective for the forgiveness of sins, can we find forgiveness of sins if we look anywhere else?
- **And so, Jesus, in His own death on the cross, fulfills this glorious picture, this glorious type, this glorious foreshadowing, this glorious symbol in Leviticus 16, but His death also fulfills that picture of the scapegoat, that ritual of riddance.**

- **When we consider the death of Jesus we almost always think of it as on our own behalf.**
- **That is, we were forgiven there. His life was poured out on our behalf and, quite properly, from that event we count our forgiveness and acceptance before God.**
- **But what this is teaching us is that God also had a stake in the death of Jesus, that God was blessed and glorified and magnified in that death.**

# THE SCAPEGOAT



# THE SCAPEGOAT

**<sup>20</sup> And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:**

**<sup>21</sup> 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 goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness:**

**<sup>22</sup> And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.**

- **20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:**
- **In Leviticus 16:20-22, we come to the most striking phase of the ceremony of the day of atonement- the law of the scapegoat and the release of the scapegoat.**
- **After the sin of the high priest his fellow priests sin was dealt with, and after the tabernacle itself with its utensils was cleansed, by sacrificing the first goat and applying its blood inside the tabernacle-tent, Aaron returned to the courtyard.**
- **The goat destined by lot for Azazel, which was standing in the court before the Lord, was now brought to the high priest, that he might complete the sin-offering for the Israelites by transference of sin to, and release of the scapegoat.**

- **And Aaron shall lay both his hands.**
- **Aaron took the second or scapegoat destined 'for Azazel,' and laid “both of his hands” upon its head, and confessed aloud all the sins of the nation, thereby symbolizing the transference of all the people's iniquities, all the transgressions, and all the sins to the goat (vv. 20-22).**
- **The triple use of all the iniquities...all their transgressions...all their sins gives a strong emphasis because the confession of sin was to be complete.**
- **With the imposition of “both his hands,” a phrase which only occurs in this ceremony, the high priest indicated in the most solemn manner possible that both the slain goat and the scapegoat were now bearing the penalty of all the sins of Israel.**
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- **The confession of sins in this way was an important part of the Day of Atonement ritual, that linked the concept of the confession of sin and atonement.**
- **Since Aaron also put both his hands upon the head of the scapegoat, he symbolically transferred the sins of the people to the scapegoat also.**
- **So although the scapegoat was not slain, it also bore all of the people's iniquities, and therefore also pictures Christ like the slain goat.**
- **Just as the slain goat was killed as a representative of the nation before God, the scapegoat would carry away the sins as a representative of the nation also.**

- **It is said that the high priest would say the following prayer of confession of sins while he laid both of his hands on the scapegoat's head:** "O God, thy people, the House of Israel, have committed iniquity, transgressed, and sinned before thee. O God, forgive, I pray, the iniquities and transgressions and sins which thy people, the House of Israel, have committed and transgressed and sinned before thee; as it is written in the law of thy servant Moses, *For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you: from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord.*'

- **The description is all encompassing. Included within it were their inner sins and their outward behaviour, sins in both thought and deed, and failure to do what God required, including rebellions of the heart).**
- **But not sins done with a high hand. These last, if to be forgiven, required special mercy from God individually given as in the case of David with Bathsheba. But usually they received the death penalty.**
- **The goat, over which the sins of the people had been humbly and penitently confessed, and to which they were figuratively transferred, was certainly a fine and most expressive emblem that, on condition of the repentance of mankind, and their faith in him who was represented by this goat, and was in due time to take away the sins of the world, God would remember their sins and iniquities no more.**
- and that a very free and full confession was to be made, and that the smallest sins needed, and the greatest sins were not excluded from, the benefit of Christ's death here represented.
- By charging all their sins and the punishment due to them upon the goat, which though only a ceremony, yet being done according to God's appointment, and manifestly pointing at Christ, upon whom their iniquities and punishments were laid, [Isaiah 53:5,6](#), as an expiatory sacrifice for their sins, and to prevent their ruin.
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- After the priest confessed the sins of the community over its head, the scapegoat was led sent away from the camp, into the wilderness, and then released, to pursue its own course.
- This was a perfect demonstration of atonement under the Old Covenant. Before the completed work of Jesus on the cross, sin could be put away, but never really eliminated. The sin-bearing goat, bearing the sin of Israel, was alive somewhere but put away.
- The picture of the goat going away, and away, and away, a lessening speck on the horizon, and never heard of more is the divine symbol of the great fact that there is full, free, everlasting forgiveness, and on God's part, utter forgetfulness (Leviticus 16:8, 10, 22, 26).
- 'I will remember them no more at all for ever.'"
- *During the second Temple, however, the authorities decreed that the animal must be destroyed. It seems that later the ceremony was altered, so the goat would be killed and have no chance of contacting Israel again.*

- **He was sent away by the hand of a “fit” man**
- The guilt-laden scapegoat or *Azazel*, upon whom the sins of the people were placed, was handed over to “a fit man,” whose task it was to lead it alive, and bearing upon it all the people’s iniquities, deep into the wilderness, so that it would never return.
- “Into the wilderness” signified the removal of their sins far away, both from the people, and out of God’s sight, or from the place of his presence as taught in Psalm 103:12 which teaches **“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us”**.
- Sending the scapegoat far away into the wilderness to a place from which it could not return, was apparently a further picture to the people that their sins had been laid on an innocent victim and had been taken far away from them. **Refernces (20-22)**.
- The fit man is said to be a trusted man previously appointed for the occasion and standing in readiness, as one that knew the wilderness, and the way to it, and what places in it are most convenient for that use.
- And so we see here in Leviticus 16, cleansing through the shed blood and also by riddance being fulfilled in Jesus’ atonement, Jesus’ abandonment, Jesus’ bloodshed, and Jesus’ dereliction.
- The phrase “a fit man,” occurs nowhere else in the Bible. I believe this speaks of Christ, because there no one else appointed to take our sins away. **Refernces ????**
- ***in the Gospel of Matthew, as Matthew talks about Jesus’ lifting up that cry: “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” you see Jesus utterly forsaken. He’s the sin bearer of His people, removing His people’s sin—the due penalty of it—and expressing in that abandonment and in that riddance what we ought to have experienced.***

- **The rabbis say that that man who was appointed here in Leviticus 16 to take that scapegoat into the wilderness was to journey twelve miles into the wilderness, and then was to remain until that scapegoat was completely out of his sight; and then, he would turn, and he would come back to the people of God.**
- **In the time of the Second Temple the goat was destroyed by being precipitated from a high cliff.**

# Significance of the scapegoat

- What's being pictured there?
- Two things are being pictured there.
- This whole passage shows the cleansing of Israel and the cleansing of the tabernacle through blood and through riddance.
- Although the scapegoat was not slain, it also bore all of the people's iniquities, and therefore also pictures Christ.
- Just as the slain goat was killed as a representative of the nation before God, this goat would carry away the sins as a representative of the nation.
- The scapegoat is the picture of the removal of Israel's sin out of the middle of Israel's camp and Israel's sin being literally carried out into the wilderness, out of their sight.
- It also pictures the Lord removing our sin from us as far as the east is from the west.
- But it is also a picture, isn't it, of what Israel's sin deserved. Israel's sin deserved their being cut off from God, sent out into the wilderness, cut off from God's people.
- But of course, ultimately as a Christian, you can't read this passage without contemplating how it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who in His own body on the tree bore our sins.
- The second goat represents Christ as bearing the whole weight and load of our guilt, all that which the Devil tries to use as a basis upon which to ground his accusations against us.

- The idea is clear. All the sins of Israel have been borne away and are carried by another, as the scapegoat was banished from Israel for ever.
- There is in this a vivid reminder here that earthly ritual could not finally deal with sin. There was no way that sin could be destroyed. It would be left to wander in a desolate place.
- Its destruction would await the coming of One Who would put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself ([Hebrews 9:26](#)), and Who would destroy him that had the power of death, and the Devil ([Hebrews 2:14](#); [1 John 3:8](#)).
- We have in this vivid picture of the live he-goat the reminder that our Lord Jesus Christ too was 'made sin for us' ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)). He took on Himself our sin, that we might be imbued with His righteousness. He was not only an offering and sacrifice for our sins, bearing their deserved punishment, but actually took them on Himself and bore them away with Him. He bore them to that most desolate of places, His grave. But such was His holiness and the sufficiency of His once-for-all sacrifice that those sins were neutralised, nay were destroyed, so that He did not need to remain in a solitary place, but was raised from the dead and glorified as the firstfruits of His own work.

- The sins and transgressions of Israel are seen as ‘put on’ the head of the live he-goat.
- It is to be seen as carrying all their sins with it. Then the live goat is sent away into the wilderness by the hand of a man already selected and waiting in readiness, ‘bearing on it all their iniquities to a solitary land’, and there he is to let it go.
- Clearly the intention was that this would be far enough away from the camp to ensure that it never returned. It is to be a place where no men dwell.
- The wilderness was to them a place where God rules without interference ([Genesis 16:7](#); [Exodus 5:1](#) and often).
- There was Sinai, the mountain of God ([Exodus 3:1](#) with Exodus 12; [Exodus 19:2-3](#); [Exodus 19:20](#) and often). This goat was sent away into this desert land, and left for God to do with as He willed.

- **Sins were dealt with in two ways on the day of atonement: through a ritual of blood and ritual of riddance.**
- **Jesus, by His death fulfilled the picture of that ritual of riddance, which the scapegoat portrayed.**
- **The practice of the sending away of the scapegoat upon whom the priest's hand laid all the sins, and all the iniquities of Israel, and then sending the chosen "fit" man, to lead the scapegoat out into the wilderness, as presented in verses 20-22, is a demonstration of the ritual of riddance.**
- **The scapegoat thus pictures Jesus who bore our sins, and by taking them away, frees us from the guilt of our sins. The scapegoat pictured Christ's victory, in the total removal of sin in the sanctification of the soul, because the scapegoat bore all the sins of Israel away just as Christ did (vv. 8-10).**

- **This was a perfect demonstration of atonement under the Old Covenant. Before the completed work of Jesus on the cross, sin could be put away, but never really eliminated. The sin-bearing goat, bearing the sin of Israel, was alive somewhere but put away.**
- **The picture of the goat going away, and away, and away, a lessening speck on the horizon, and never heard of more is the divine symbol of the great fact that there is full, free, everlasting forgiveness, and on God's part, utter forgetfulness.**

- **The goat that was sent away was a symbol of the entire removal of the sins for which the blood of the sacrificed animals had already made atonement**
- **The setting free of the live goat- the Scapegoat - pictured God's forgiveness of their sins, but, the death of the other goat was first required .**
- **The scapegoat, was a picture of the *effect* of atonement: the penalty of our sins is cast far away, never to return.**

- **The goat which was driven away from the camp, into the wilderness, never to return, symbolizes the even greater agony of our Lord, His separation from the Father, due to the fact that the sins of all men were borne by Him.**
- **This is the agony which caused Him to agonize in the Garden of Gethsemane. This is the one Old Testament sacrifice which reflects one of the most gruesome aspects of our Lord's atoning work as our substitute.**

- This live goat, or “scapegoat” the "Azazel" or "the goat that departs" or "is banished" was symbolic of the removal of sin from the presence of God's glory (partially visible in the Holy of Holies) in the midst of His people to a place far from God.
- The scapegoat symbolically bore the sins of the people of Israel and removed them from God's presence.
- The scapegoat, was a picture of the *effect* of atonement: the penalty of our sins cast far away, never to return.
- The scapegoat represented them being put away. It showed that God has not only forgiven our sins, but He has put them away.

- **When the scapegoat was sent away into the wilderness, it was lost, never to be seen again. The scapegoat thus pictures Jesus Christ, and what He did for our sins, by taking them away never to be brought back.**
- **The idea that Jesus is our scapegoat who carried away our sins for ever, is presented to us in several scriptures such as Psalm 103:12 which states ,**
- **As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.**
- **Also Jeremiah 31:34 ..."I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."**
- **See also Micah 7:19.**
- It is noteworthy that the term "scapegoat" is not mentioned again in the Old Testament or significantly in the New (especially Hebrews 8–10), probably because the work of Christ was one that was never to be repeated. Cf Hebrews 9 Or 10 once
- Once, only once, and once for all, His precious blood he shed. .

- The scapegoat portrays Christ bearing sin away.
- — As the goat went away, the eyes of the people followed it, and they were taught to believe that sin was no longer reckoned to them. Aaron put off his linen garments and arrayed himself in festal robes, and came forth to bless the congregation. What rejoicing must have broken from the crowds! So Jesus, in his matchless grace, has borne away the sin of the world into a land of forgetfulness. “Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”
- The scapegoat portrays Christ’s loneliness.
- — He was alone in his mediatorial work. None could bear Him company. Loved ones might stand beside his cross, or in after ages suffer, as He did, deaths of martyrdom; but none could do what He did as the sacrifice for sin. Ah, how lonely He was! Even the Father seemed to have forsaken Him! Before the universe, in that dread hour, the Savior stood in awful, unapproachable solitude!

- **The scapegoat which was led away into the wilderness portrays Christ made sin.**
- **— With both hands Aaron, in symbol, transferred all the iniquities, sins, and transgressions of the people to the head of the goat, which became so identified with them that it was accounted an unclean thing; such that the fit man who led it away needed to wash his clothes and bathe afterwards.**
- **This is what the apostle means when he says that Jesus was made sin for us.**
- **Our sins met in Him; were assumed by Him; He stood before God as though, in some mysterious sense, they were his own.**

- **We speak of the language of Isaiah: “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” But does not Paul speak of that in 2 Corinthians 5:21? “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**
- **There you see Paul speaking of the Lord’s laying on Him our iniquities, that He might carry them away. And at the cross, don’t we see in Jesus’ cry, “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” the language of the scapegoat who has been taken into the wilderness and forsaken.**

- Although the blood ritual of the annual Day of Atonement had meaning to the Israelite people of Old Testament times, it was still only a shadow or outline of the reality that was to come through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 7:19; Hebrews 10:1).
- For the way in which it pictured the sacrificial death of Christ, and for the contrast between its limitations and the perfection of the atoning work of Christ, one must study Hebrews 9:6-14 and Hebrews 9:23-28.

- The setting free of the live goat- the Scapegoat - pictured God's forgiveness of their sins, but, the death of the other goat was first required . "Salvation is free...but it is not cheap!"
- The second goat, the scapegoat, was a picture of the effect of atonement: the penalty of our sins is cast far away, never to return.
- The goat sent off into the wilderness with the sinner's guilt imputed to it symbolized the removal of guilt (cf. [Leviticus 14:4-7](#)).
- It was a sin offering as well as the other goat (Lev 16:5).
- Some interpreters see an allusion to this goat in Isaiah 53:6 and Hebrews 13:12.

- You know, we spoke of the language of Isaiah: “The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” But does not Paul speak of that in II Corinthians 5:21? “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
- There you see Paul speaking of the Lord’s laying on Him our iniquities, that He might carry them away. And at the cross, don’t we see in Jesus’ cry, **“My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?”** the language of the scapegoat who has been taken into the wilderness and forsaken.
- It is said that the rabbis say that that man who was appointed here in Leviticus 16 to take that scapegoat into the wilderness was to journey twelve miles into the wilderness, and then was to remain until that scapegoat was completely out of his sight; and then, he would turn, and he would come back to the people of God.
- **In the Gospel of Matthew, as Matthew talks about Jesus’ lifting up that cry: “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?” you see Jesus utterly forsaken. He’s the sin bearer of His people, removing His people’s sin—the due penalty of it—and expressing in that abandonment and in that riddance what we ought to have experienced.**
- **And so we see cleansing through blood and riddance here in Leviticus 16 being fulfilled in Jesus’ atonement, Jesus’ abandonment, Jesus’ bloodshed, and Jesus’ dereliction.**