

## **Lord of the Sabbath**

Program #34

The Two Goats of Yom Kippur

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Last Sabbath, we began a discussion of the Day of Atonement. We covered a number of things that are unique to this Day EVEN among all seven holy days of the LORD. Mainly, I focused on what the people of God (only the Israelites at the time) were commanded to do on this specific holy day on God's sacred calendar. It involved afflicting their soul for a full twenty-four hours with a complete fast of all food and drink.

But, there are other important things done ONLY on this day each year. One involves a very unique command to be done by the high priest. The high priest is to personally choose two goats by lot before the LORD. What these two goats represent has led to much confusion and debate among the people of God. In this program, I am going to explore this subject and offer my own, somewhat controversial, interpretation.

Let's start with the command of the LORD for the high priest. We find it first mentioned in Ex. 30: 10 for Aaron, the brother of Moses, and the first high priest of Israel:

*And Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD.*

This is referring to the Tent of the Meeting Tabernacle in the wilderness where the LORD dwelt with the children of Israel BEFORE He led them to the promised land of Israel where a Temple for the LORD would be built in Jerusalem. The atonement mentioned is specifically for the alter (which had four horns on it at the corners). Note specifically that the blood of the sin offering was sprinkled on the alter of the LORD once a year to make it, or to keep it, holy. In fact this alter was viewed as "most holy" by the LORD.

In the book of Leviticus, specifically Chapters 1-15, there are many instructions regarding various atonements and also various actions for the high priest. There is no doubt that atonement was of great interest to the LORD. His sanctuary, His priests and His people had to be holy to come into His presence. They all had to be atoned for and washed or cleansed of sin or defilement in order to appear before the LORD.

It is in Chapter 16, that Aaron, by name, is given a rather unique command for His duties regarding two goats on the Day of Atonement. Let's read the word of the LORD as found in Lev. 16: 5-10:

*And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and*

*his house. He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat of which the LORD'S lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.*

For those who keep this commanded day holy, there are several different attempts made to find a representation for these two goats or their meaning in God's prophetic plan of salvation in His Son, the Savior. Who, or what, did these two goats represent? What could they mean to a disciple of Christ? I will offer what may be a new viewpoint today. I do not speak authoritatively but only to attempt to grow in the knowledge of our Savior.

The essentially unanimous interpretation of the goat to which the LORD'S lot fell is that it represents none other than Jesus, the Christ. There is no doubt that it was the shed blood of Jesus that atoned for the sin of the people of God, but even for the sins of the whole world. We read that in 1 John 2: 1-2:

*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation of our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.*

Here we have one of those \$25 Biblical words: "propitiation." If you know what that word means, you are way smarter than I am. So, I had to do a little study on what the Apostle John is claiming. Being a propitiation is just another way of saying He was an atoning sacrifice or the atonement for our sins. So, I think you can see some connection with the goat whose lot was for the LORD. It too was an atoning sacrifice for sin.

But, does that really equate Jesus, the Son of God with the goat sacrificed on the Day of Atonement? Was Jesus a prophesied type of this goat that would have to be slain as a sacrifice for sin? Is this goat the main point of the Day of Atonement and its link to our Savior?

Well, I have trouble thinking of Jesus as any kind of goat. I don't find that He is represented in any other scripture as a goat. What He is referred to in scripture as being is the Lamb of God. He is a sheep symbolically, not a goat. The people of God are also referred to as sheep in God's pasture with Jesus as their Good and Great Shepherd.

In Mat. 25: 32, we find Jesus telling us something important about Himself and the future Judgment of God:

*When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from*

*the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

But, to the goats on his left He says the following as shown in Mat. 25: 41:

*Then He will also say to those on the left hand (the goats), 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

In this symbolic talk by Christ, I would not want to be a goat, would you? I would want to be a sheep as God often refers to as His people. For He places His righteous sheep on His right hand. Well, do you see my problem here? If being a goat seems to be something bad or evil or cursed by Christ, I not only don't want to be a goat, I would not want to refer to Jesus as a goat!

At the end of Mat. 25, in Verse 46, we get this picture of goats in Christ's prophecy:

*And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*

Again, should we not want to strive to be sheep at the Son of Man's right hand and not goats at His left hand?

Allow me to raise another perceptual connotation of both the atonement and who is being judged which leads me to not be comfortable trying to say that Jesus is the future goat of the Day of Atonement that is slain before the LORD as an atoning sacrifice for the sins of His disciples and even for all the world.

Notice that in Matthew 25, Jesus is referring to all nations that will be gathered before Him which He will judge and separate as goats on His left hand and sheep on His right hand. We have to recognize that at the time of the exodus from Egypt, the nation of Israel was about to be formed. Israel could be a righteous nation that obeys the commands of the God of Abraham who delivered them from slavery in Egypt and gave them liberty in the Promised Land. Israel could have been a light to all the NATIONS of the world.

As we know, Israel repeatedly disobeyed God and went its own way. They were even making and worshipping other gods and committing adultery which is called idolatry. This would actually be contrary to the first three of the Ten Commandments which were the basis of the marriage covenant that God made with the nation and people of Israel.

When you look carefully at what Aaron was commanded to do on the Day of Atonement, you will quickly discover that the sins of the people seem to refer to the sins of the nation Israel against God. Their sins, as a nation, or community, could defile not only the Temple of God but the nation of God which He personally established out of all the peoples and nations of the earth. God resided in Israel and holiness was required in it.

More evidence can be found that nations, or at least their leaders, can represent goats in Scripture and in prophecy. In Daniel 8: 21, we see a clear prophetic reference given by the Archangel Gabriel to Daniel regarding a future king of a nation as a goat:

*And the male goat is the Kingdom of Greece.*

When I discussed the prophetic meaning of the Day of Atonement, I said it represented a time of Judgment by God in the end of time when Jesus returns to the earth at the Mount of Olives in a like manner from where and how he rose to heaven. Obviously sin is involved in this Judgment by God.

It is my current impression that the time between His return as King with His heavenly army and the saints on the Day of Atonement on the tenth day of the seventh month and the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles on the fifteenth day of that month will entail a Judgment of nations, those who come against Israel. Much details of this are revealed in the Book of Revelation in further explanation of the writings of the Prophets. What happens to the nations of the world and Babylon the Great at this end time Judgment boggles the mind. The Battle of Armageddon will be the war to end all wars.

The sins of these nations will not be covered over at this Judgment of the Nations on the Day of Atonement as the sins of national Israel have been since the Exodus until the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. The sins of these nations that come against God's people in Israel and Jerusalem will be exposed and then they will suffer destruction at the hands of the King of kings. He will then rule them properly with a rod of iron during what is called the millennial reign of Jesus as the King, Lord and High Priest over all the earth. Praise God!

If the goat whose lot falls to the LORD for a sin offering sacrifice is somewhat confusing, the goat whose lot is to be presented before the LORD alive will tie you into knots like a pretzel. Here you will find religious groups who firmly believe this live goat, known as the scapegoat, or Azazel, represents Satan. Others are of the mind that it too represents Jesus. You would surely think that a distinction between such great extremes as Jesus and Satan could be easily found and elucidated. But, you would think wrong.

Folks who see this scapegoat as symbolizing Satan make some good arguments. After all, they know that Satan will be chained and led into an abyss like a wilderness where he will be imprisoned and not be able to deceive the nations during the 1,000 year reign of Christ as King over all the earth. We see this clearly revealed in Rev. 20: 1-3:

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive not the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.*

Note clearly the emphasis on nations, NOT on individual people. There is a teaching in Judaism that the Day of Atonement ceremony only covered sins against God by the people or nation of Israel. In other words, the Day of Atonement was not dealing with personal sins against neighbors and family such as dishonoring parents, committing murder, adultery, stealing, lying or coveting your neighbor's goods. These kind of human relational sins were subject to sin and other trespass offerings made even daily throughout the year before God, not just on the Day of Atonement.

Another clue that the Day of Atonement was neither for all Jews nor for all sins is that Jews living outside of the land of Israel did not participate in the Day of Atonement ceremony. It was an appointed day but before the pilgrim Feast of Tabernacles for which a visit to Jerusalem even from afar was required. Recall how at the Feast of Pentecost, when Peter spoke his sermon, Jews from many other countries had assembled in Jerusalem and heard them speaking in tongues. This was not the case for the Day of Atonement.

While Satan will certainly be bound with a chain and led into the abyss and sealed in his prison for a thousand years, does this happen on the Day of Atonement or even before during the Days of Awe and the Great Tribulation? Well it does NOT appear to be so from the Book of Revelation.

In Revelation 19: 11, we see when the gate to heaven is opened to allow the one on the white horse called Faithful and True to judge the earth and make war and return to the earth. He comes with the armies in heaven clothed in fine linen for they have been cleansed on the Day of Atonement. Notice that the one called Faithful and True was clothed in a robe dipped in blood. This is also the case with the high priest of Israel after his duties. Could it also be for our High Priest, Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Son of God and the Lamb of God? It would seem to be so.

Then, meaning "next" or after His return on the Day of Atonement, He makes war with the kings of the earth and their armies led by the beast who is the instrument of Satan and the false prophet who deceives the people to take the mark of the beast. When that war is fought, the blood will run as high as the horses bridle.

When the beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire the battle is won and the war is over. The birds of heaven will eat the flesh of these armies composed of a hundred million men who fight against our King and His army. No precise number of days are given for these things to occur, but it would seem to be longer than one day in time. Perhaps this occurs during the four days between the Day of Atonement and the start of the Feast of Tabernacles? It certainly seems possible and even plausible.

But, notice for sure, it is only AFTER the battle of Armageddon in Rev. 20, that Satan is chained and sealed in the abyss or bottomless pit. This would also be AFTER the Day of Atonement. Then, next, in Rev. 20: 4-6, we now see the actual Kingdom reign for a thousand years begin AFTER Satan is bound and sealed.

All this fortifies my understanding that the scapegoat of the Day of Atonement is NOT Satan. Satan is first led away and bound after the Day of Atonement. And, does it make any sense at all to consider that a goat that the high priest lays his hands on, who has done nothing evil on his own, would represent Satan? Satan is evil all the time. Does it make any sense that the sins of the people of Israel would be put on Satan and he would merely be led away into the wilderness and then let go? Does it make sense that Satan is let go while Jesus is slain?

I surely was taught that this scapegoat was a shadow of Satan to come when Christ returns. And, Satan would be put in prison. But, I do not see it that way any more. The symbolism seems wrong, and the timing is wrong. Where there is this much smoke, there is probably a fire. And, anyone who continues to support this teaching may be the one to get burned.

It also troubles me theologically, that our sins can be placed upon Satan and be taken away. Why would Satan do that? It reminds me of that old saying, "The Devil made me do it!" This is bad theology. We can't blame our sin on Satan or anyone else. We see this tendency in man right from the start in the Garden of Eden. Eve blames Satan and Adam blames Eve. In a way they can blame God because He created Satan and allowed him to deceive Adam and Eve. No way my friends. We shall all give an answer for every sin we commit unless it has been forgiven and the penalty paid for us by Christ. Amen?

Seriously, if you can make a case that the scapegoat does represent Satan while answering the questions I have raised, I hope you will contact me and straighten me out. Until then, I will still love you as you try to deal with the scriptures and the other possible meanings of the goats on the Day of Atonement.

Others who have had difficulty identifying the scapegoat as a shadow of Satan, have developed some pretty strong points that suggest the scapegoat is also symbolizing Jesus. Now we have two goats symbolizing one Christ. Some will say it is the same Christ but describes His first and second comings. Some will argue convincingly that it is only Jesus who can take or carry sins of others away in addition to paying our death price.

What Bible reader could argue against what John the Baptist said about Jesus when he saw Him coming to be baptized by John? We find it in John 1: 29:

*The next day John [the Baptist] saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,  
"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

What could be more clear? Isn't it Jesus who takes away the sin of the world? You bet He does. Praise God! But, the scapegoat only took away the sins of the people of the nation of Israel.

If I had to pick between the scapegoat being Satan or being Jesus, I WOULD pick Jesus.

However is there another choice? You bet there is!

After much prayer and study, my mind has been opened up to the possibility that the goats were simply goats. They were clean and innocent animals, of which one needed to be offered before the LORD as a sin offering sacrifice to cleanse the people of their sin against Him as God's people and holy nation. The other goat may be used to show that while the slain goat to cleanse them and the Temple and the priesthood of past sin, the sin needed to be taken away so that the people of God could worship next year before God at the Temple as holy and undefiled nation and people in the presence of God.

But, Kenny, you say, then where is the fulfillment of this holy day in Christ? It now seems so obvious, I can't really believe I never saw it before. The difference I now see is in the high priest. The difference is in how the high priest of Israel deals with sin compared to how our High Priest, Christ, deals with sin. There is a world of difference here. And, that difference equates to the difference between eternal life with Him and destruction in the lake of fire.

In the next Program, I will go through the marvelous role of our High Priest in our salvation from the penalty of sin. Christ is really not like the high priest of Israel at all. He is far superior and leads a much better priesthood, of which we shall one day be a part.

We will also review a reason why even if the blood of Jesus shed at Calvary atoned for our sin, we still need to keep the Day of Atonement. I believe any gospel of easy grace, of a simple one time belief in Jesus, where our sins will just increase His grace is dead wrong. "God forbid!" is the way the Apostle Paul put it.

Allow me to make this point. I think we need to understand that there is a different fulfillment in the Day of Atonement for the church of God, for Jews and for unbelieving gentiles. Not only may we need to understand that the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement is more about what the high priest of Israel could do and could not do, we may need to separate what the future fulfillment in Christ will mean to these different groups and when and how they can receive atonement.

Just ask yourself, could the high priest of Israel cleanse the sins of all the world and remove them as far as east is from the west with two goats? No, at best, just the sins of Israel against God could be cleansed and be carried away only about twelve miles from the Temple into a wilderness area.

Could our High Priest who now sits at the throne of our Father in the highest heaven cleanse all sins of all people and take them away as far as east is from the west? You bet He can! And, with that great of a High Priest we can rejoice as we head into the Feast of Tabernacles! That is when the harvest of all souls will be culminated.

I guess what I have raised for your consideration is why do the goats themselves have to

be symbolic of anything future in Christ? What is the future symbol of fulfillment for the bull that Aaron sacrifices as a sin offering for himself? Does this bull relate to Christ too? If the bull on the Day of Atonement as a personal sin offering for the high priest does not seem to represent anything future about Christ, then why do the two goats have to represent anything future in Christ?

Well, perhaps I am barking up the wrong tree? But, I see more the difference in what the goats do being relevant with how sin can be forgiven and removed forever in the Kingdom of God.

So, I hope you will join me next Sabbath as we explore the incredible prophetic fulfillment of God's Judgment in His plan of salvation for mankind. You can't help but get excited about this plan and how it rolls right into the Feast of Tabernacles that begins only five days later.

Until then, this is Brother Kenny praying that you keep your eye on the Lord of the Sabbath and be watching for His return as King of kings. May God be gracious to you as you worship and praise our Lord of the Sabbath as one of His disciples who keep the holy days that He made for all men.