

The Day of Atonement: From Shadow to Reality

A Prophetic Study Linking Leviticus 16 and Revelation 20

This Bible study explores the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), occurring on the 10th day of the seventh month, and traces its prophetic fulfillment from the Old Testament tabernacle rituals to the final binding of Satan in the Book of Revelation.

Part 1: Scripture References for the 10th Day of the Seventh Month

The Day of Atonement is established as a permanent statute for Israel, characterized by a total fast (afflicting one's soul) and a complete rest from work.

Leviticus 16:29-31

"This shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever."

Leviticus 23:27-32

"Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the Lord. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord your God. For any person who is not afflicted in soul on that same day shall be cut off from his people. And any person who does any work on that same day, that person I will destroy from among his people. You shall do no work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest, and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

Numbers 29:7

"On the tenth day of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall afflict your souls; you shall not do any work."

Leviticus 25:9

"Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land."

Acts 27:9 (Note: 'The Fast' in New Testament times universally referred to the Day of Atonement)

"Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous because the Fast was already over, Paul advised them..."

Part 2: The Two Goats of Leviticus 16

The core ceremony of the Day of Atonement involved two male goats. This is where the typology of Christ's ultimate victory over sin and Satan is introduced.

Leviticus 16:7-10

"He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat [Azazel]. And Aaron shall bring the goat on 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."

Leviticus 16:20-22

"And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall let the goat go in the wilderness."

Part 3: Prophetic Fulfillment in Revelation 20

The Book of Revelation mirrors the high priest's actions with the live goat, showing how the author of sin is finally separated from humanity at the beginning of the Millennium.

Revelation 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 sealed it over him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while."

Part 4: Typological Breakdown: Leviticus 16 to Revelation 20

To understand how the ritual points to the binding of Satan, we must examine the specific roles played by the characters and elements in both accounts.

1. The Lord's Goat vs. The Scapegoat (Azazel)

The High Priest cast lots to choose between two goats:

- **The Lord's Goat** represented Jesus Christ. It was slain as a sin offering. Its blood was brought into the Holy of Holies to cleanse the people and pay the death penalty for sin. Hebrews 9:12 confirms Christ did this: 'Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.'
- **The Scapegoat (Hebrew: Azazel)** represents Satan the devil. While Christ's sacrifice pays for the guilt of human sin, Satan is the original source, instigator, and tempter of sin (Genesis 3; John 8:44). The scapegoat is not sacrificed; it carries the blame away, completely separated from God's people.

2. The Confession and Placing of Sins

In Leviticus 16:21, after the sanctuary is fully cleansed and the people's sins are covered by the first goat's blood, the High Priest places his hands on the live goat. He confesses all the sins of Israel, transferring the ultimate accountability onto the head of the scapegoat.

Prophetically, after Christ returns and completes the resurrection and salvation of His saints (cleansing the spiritual temple), the ultimate accountability for the deception and existence of sin is placed back onto Satan.

3. The Fit Man and the Angel

In the Old Testament, the scapegoat is not left to wander on its own near the camp. A 'suitable man' or 'fit man' is designated to take the goat by force.

In Revelation 20:1, this is fulfilled by a mighty angel coming down from heaven. Just as the fit man led the scapegoat away, this angel lays hold of Satan with a great chain.

4. The Wilderness and the Bottomless Pit

The fit man leads the scapegoat into an 'uninhabited land,' a desolate wilderness where it can no longer influence or contact the camp of Israel.

In Revelation 20:2-3, the angel casts Satan into the 'bottomless pit' (the abyss), shutting him up and sealing it over him. This ensures he cannot deceive the nations during the 1000-year reign of Christ on earth. The abyss serves as the ultimate prophetic wilderness.

Conclusion

The Day of Atonement is a picture of total reconciliation between God and humanity. This reconciliation requires two distinct phases:

1. **The payment for human transgression** through the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ (The Lord's Goat).
2. **The total removal of the instigator of sin** from the presence of humanity (The Scapegoat/Azazel).

By studying Leviticus 16 alongside Revelation 20, we see that the ancient autumn holy day directly prefigures the moment when the cosmic tempter is chained and locked away, allowing the earth to experience true peace, rest, and atonement during the Millennium.