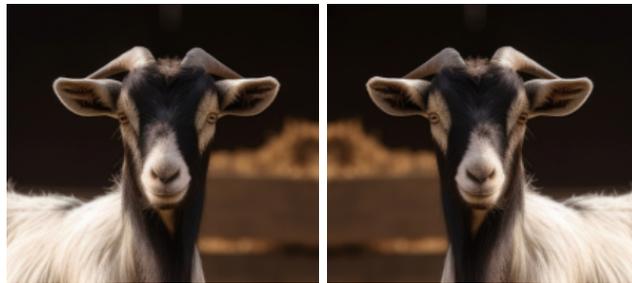


The Wonder of the Day of Atonement

Many Christians are in danger of spiritual death, regardless of having accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. How can this be said? The ceremony on the Day of Atonement holds all of the answers.

“The LORD said to Moses, ‘The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the LORD by fire. Do no work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God’” (Leviticus 23:26-28a).



Aaron is to take two goats, “present them before the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat” (Leviticus 16:6-8).

Each young goat images a leader and the role the leader fulfills. The questions are:

- Who are the leaders?
- What role do they fulfill?



God has carefully and methodically established a specific set of processes to atone for His people that will be fulfilled on the official Day of Atonement. These processes comprise of two main components:

1. The sacrifice of a young goat to cover the sins of God’s people

2. The release of a live young goat in the wilderness as a scapegoat is used for making atonement of God's people.

The process of the ceremony is comprised of several very important and unique features, which are key to adding clarity of understanding of this unique Holy Day.

Unique features:

- Two young goats from their herd are presented before the LORD
 - The two young goats are both without blemish and in this case, they are indistinguishable because it requires the casting of lots in the assignment of the roles. Both young goats qualify for either role.
- Lots were cast giving the LORD Almighty the task of choosing which young goat is to Him and which young goat would be kept alive as the scapegoat. Casting lots was a common practice in ancient times for calling on God or the gods over the nations to make the decision of the outcome. A good example of the practice of the casting of lots is when God chose the tribe of Levi to be His priests. God commanded each leader of each tribe to provide a rod. Overnight, Aaron's rod was the only one to demonstrate a miraculous change. It "put forth buds, produced blossoms, and bore ripe almonds" (Numbers 23:8).

SCRIPTURES THAT SUPPORT GOD USING THE CASTING OF LOTS TO AFFIRM HIS DECISION.

Decision from the LORD: "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD" (Proverbs 16:33).

"Then they drew lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so, he was added to the eleven apostles" (Acts 1:26).

"Distribute the land by lot, according to your clans. To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Whatever falls by lot will be theirs. Distribute it according to your ancestral tribes" (Numbers 33:64).

SCRIPTURES THAT SUPPORT THE CUSTOM OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

Custom of the priesthood: "He was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense" (Luke 1:9).

"These were the Levites, according to their families. They also cast lots, just as their brothers the descendants of Aaron did, in the presence of King David and of Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites" (I Chronicles 24:30-31).

ISRAEL ALONE WERE NOT THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO UTILIZED THE CASTING OF LOTS.

Custom among the people outside of Israel: “Then the sailors said to each other, ‘Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.’ They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah” (Jonah 1:7).

It becomes apparent in the story of Jonah that it was not only the ancient Israelites using the lot method to ask their god to make the decision on a matter. The sailors on the boat each worshipped different gods. “All of the sailors were afraid and **each cried out to his own god**” (Jonah 1:5).

So, it is evident that other people from the different cities outside of Israel also utilized the casting of lots to ask their god for the decision of a matter. The sailors worshipping different gods suggested that lots be cast to determine who was responsible for the calamity they were experiencing. The lot fell on Jonah.

The casting of lots is an essential practice for the ritual on the Day of Atonement because only Almighty God, the Creator with the legal right as the Owner of all created, can determine the leader to fulfill the sacred Day of Atonement. The two young goats were both without blemish and equally qualified for the atonement ceremony. The two roles comprise of a sacrifice and an ongoing atonement until the Day of Atonement is fulfilled. The casting of lots represents Almighty God’s direct input in assigning each role to each goat.

THE FIRST YOUNG GOAT

The young goat the LORD chose for Himself would be sacrificed as a sin offering in redemptive payment of the sins of His people, Israel and all of mankind.

Violations of God’s law results in penalties. The sins of Israel resulted in their death. The legal price for the sins of God’s people would be reconciled by the sacrifice imaged in the young goat God selected to Himself. The LORD God is the ultimate Judge who only can rule on an offense that would satisfy His law. Satisfying God’s law is the first step to receiving eternal life.

The Son of God was the leader imaged in the first young goat. Jesus Christ died on the cross and his redemptive sacrifice was fulfilled on the Passover.

THE SECOND YOUNG GOAT

The second young goat would be presented **alive before the LORD** to be **used for making atonement of His people** by **sending it into the wilderness** as a **scapegoat**.

Each of the highlighted points above will be discussed separately.

ALIVE BEFORE THE LORD

The young goat remains **alive before the LORD**. This young goat is an image of a perfect being—without blemish, a spiritual leader who is alive and well and qualified to atone for the sins of God’s people.

USED FOR MAKING ATONEMENT

“Used for making atonement” that is the work of Jesus Christ who intercedes for God’s people who repent and have accepted his sacrifice as payment of their sins. Jesus Christ is also the image of the second young goat. This explains why Almighty God made the decision through the casting of lots because the priesthood could not distinguish one goat from the other. In fact, both goats image Jesus Christ. Almighty God selected the Son from before creation to be the redemptive sacrifice for mankind. Christ purchased mankind when he paid the price for their sins. They are under his jurisdiction and he alone can intercede for them.

“Because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, **because he always lives to intercede for them.** Such a high priest meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens” (Hebrews 7:25-26).

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). The spirit of Jesus Christ knows the heart of the saints. “In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know how we ought to pray, but **the Spirit Himself intercedes for us** with groans too deep for words. And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because **the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God**” (Romans 8:26-27).

The spirit of Jesus Christ intercedes for God’s people.

The two young goats image Jesus Christ who hold two roles in the salvation of mankind. The making of atonement is the second step to complete the forgiveness process. Those who accept the sacrifice of Christ have completed only the first step. Accepting the redemptive sacrifice, commits these people to the death of their old self. “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?” (Romans 6:3)

This second step is the ongoing spiritual growth of repentant people to come into the fullness of Christ. They are reborn to grow into spiritual maturity, growing in the knowledge, understanding and wisdom of God.

The Apostle Peter said, “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. **Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,** now that you have tasted that the Lord is good” (I Peter 2:1).

Repentant people begin as babes in Christ who cannot yet distinguish right from wrong.

“Anyone who lives on milk, **being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.** But solid food is for the **mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil**” (Hebrews 5:13-14).

Because the rebirth is a growing process where mistakes and errors are made, making of atonement, that is, the intercession by Jesus Christ is necessary.

Repentant people are required to overcome and reach the whole measure and fullness of Christ. Jesus gave teachers to God's people to prepare them "for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-15).

While the Day of Atonement is not fully understood among the Christian community and the rich meanings embedded in the ritual, God has still provided Christians with the essential knowledge of growing into spiritual maturity through the scriptures in the New Testament. However, the knowledge that the Day of Atonement will be **fulfilled**, ten days after Jesus Christ returns on the Feast of Trumpets/Rosh Hashanah, is a unique piece to the grand puzzle which is unveiled in the study of the Holy Day. Eventually, all of the Holy Days will be fulfilled, leaving a remembrance of God's transparency of His plan for His people.

THE WILDERNESS

"By sending it into the wilderness." The wilderness is an image of an isolated place where repenting people enter separating themselves from the general unrepentant public to grow in God's knowledge, understanding and wisdom to live righteously.

Ancient Israel entered the wilderness for forty years. It was the separation essential to their spiritual journey to draw close to God. After forty years, only the children of the original people who left Egypt survived because they did not rebel against God.

Today, into the 21st century, the journey of the Judeo-Christians who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour are separated in a virtual wilderness as they privately develop an intimate relationship with Almighty God, our LORD through Jesus Christ. As ancient Israel was fed directly by Almighty God in the forty-year wilderness journey by manna, so, the Judeo-Christians are fed by Jesus Christ after accepting his redemptive sacrifice.

THE SCAPEGOAT

The final highlighted point is the scapegoat. Jesus Christ bore the sins of all of mankind. He was the sinless, perfect sacrifice willing to die for mankind from the creation. He is the scapegoat. We see this in Isaiah, "Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life until death, and was numbered with the transgressors. **For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors**" (Isaiah 53:12).

THE ROLE OF THE FIRST YOUNG GOAT

God Almighty selected the young goat as the sacrifice for the sins of mankind. The redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ fulfilled the legal requirement for Atonement.

THE ROLE OF THE SECOND YOUNG GOAT

The role of the second young goat sent in the wilderness is the ongoing, continual work of Jesus Christ who intercedes for God's people as they grow and overcome. This work will continue and reach its apex on the official year and day of Yon Kippur—the Day of Atonement. It will take place and be fulfilled ten days after the return of Jesus Christ. It will be a solemn day for God's people. At the end of the great tribulation, Jacob's trouble, the people who are repentant and remain mortal because they have not reached the fullness of Christ and are not transformed into their spiritual bodies, will be atoned for on the Day of Atonement. They will bring this day to completion. A remembrance of this day will continue in the same way that the Passover, Feast of Weeks and Pentecost are kept today.

Before God's people enter into the Holy Land, God will have them walk under His staff and He will, at that time, purge anyone who holds an unrepentant and rebellious spirit. Ezekiel 20:38 "I will take note of you as you pass under my staff, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD" (Ezekiel 20:38).

Among God's people, people from the nations will also enter into the Holy Land. "The LORD will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. **Foreigners will join them and unit with the house of Jacob**" (Isaiah 14:1).

These foreigners who join with DNA people of God from all twelve tribes will be given rulership, an inheritance, exactly the same as the DNA people of God. Ezekiel recorded God's word. "You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the foreigners who have settled among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. In whatever tribe the foreigner settles, there you are to give him his inheritance" (Ezekiel 47:21-23).

There will be no re-atonement for God's people returning to the Holy Land at the beginning of Jesus Christ's millennial reign. They will walk under God Almighty's staff; He will purge the unrepentant and the remainder will continue to settle in the Holy Land to live righteously. The Apostle Peter urged God's people to recognize the importance of their calling.

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Both of the young goats selected for the sacramental service on the Day of Atonement image Jesus Christ. The two indistinguishable goats require the selection by Almighty God, Himself. This is intentional to point to only one heavenly ruler who could qualify to fulfill two roles. Jesus Christ fulfilled the perfect sacrifice paying the price of mankind's sins. His sacrifice entitled him

to have rulership over God's people and all of mankind and qualifies him to be able to forgive their sins, awaken the spiritually dead and heal all of the spiritual infirmities.

God's Holy Days given to His people will be remembered for all eternity.



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