

The Azazel Goat

Atonement

John W. Ritenbaugh

Given 15-Sep-94; Tape #149

Of all the holy days, Atonement is the one least looked forward to and I think also, the least understood. When I say, least looked forward to, I am referring to us, because there is always sort of a feeling of, "well I have to fast." I do not know about you, maybe I am just speaking for John Ritenbaugh here, but I do not look forward to fasting.

It is something that I do from time to time, but it is not always something that is pleasantly anticipated in anyway and so I think that whenever the Day of Atonement comes around, we are looking beyond it to the Feast of Tabernacles and at the same time there is a bit of soberness about it because of having to fast for the Day of Atonement. The fasting is not something that we eagerly anticipate doing and yet at the same time it is extremely important to the purpose and the understanding of the day.

Atonement, of all of God's holy days as far as the world is concerned, is one of the better recognized. By that I mean, that there is recognition of the name, "atonement" or its Hebrew, "Yom Kippur" and this, of course, is because of the Jews.

Almost everybody knows that the Jews keep Yom Kippur, and even on the radio here in Charlotte, one of the radio announcers was talking back and forth with a man who we did not know for sure was Jewish, but it turned out that he was and this man, the radio announcer, was Catholic. But he was very much aware that the next day was going to be the Day of Atonement, and in fact he said to the Jew, "Ah, you are going to treat me like that today and then tomorrow you're going to atone for what you have done to me today."

The world is fairly well aware of it but they have not the slightest idea, in most cases, of what it is about. That seems to be hidden even from the Jews and I think that this is because Satan, above all other days, wants to hide or to deceive man about this one.

Even the name "atonement" is somewhat vague to us. I do not think it means a great deal to the world at all. To most atone means to make up for something or to take some action that cancels out some previous bad action.

Indeed it does have that implication, but atonement is a word whose meaning has sifted during the centuries. I do not know whether you are aware of that, but the meaning of the English word atonement has changed, and the result might be that we are not getting as clear or as full of a meaning as we need, to fully appreciate what this day represents.

Do you know what the suffix "ment" does to a word? This suffix indicates the product or the result of what precedes it, that is, what it is attached to. You take the word "achieve" and you add the suffix "ment" to it and it becomes "achievement" and it means the process or action of achieving or the state that it is achieved.

"Government" means the instrument or means of governing. "Atonement," the instrument or means of atoning. Overall, the suffix "ment" means a state or condition resulting from a specific action. Now "atone" is actually two words that have been combined into one and so they are written and pronounced today as though they are one word. But if you look up "atone" in a good English dictionary you will find that they have in the explanation for the word that it previously was "at one" but through common usage of the people it came to be written and said as "atone."

So it originated "at one" and it means exactly what it says, it means a harmony. That is what it originated as and that is what the word means. Therefore, "atonement" means a state or condition resulting from a specific action of "at oneing," that is making harmony.

You will find then that "atonement" is used in two different ways. It indicates either (and sometimes both) the means by which the harmony is achieved, that is, the expiation or the payment, and the state or condition that is achieved—harmony. So it can mean either the payment or it can mean harmony, either one.

When we read about Atonement in the Bible it is very likely we do not even stop to think about that, we just go over it and we put those usages of the word right into it. Now the Day of Atonement is the day of harmony and it is observed by fasting and paying attention to the means, that is the expiation or the payment by which the harmony or the state of being 'at one' is achieved, and it also memorializes the time when all the world is going to be at harmony with itself and also with God.

At the beginning here my concern is not so much going to be with what is achieved (it will toward the end), that is harmony, but about the means, the Bible shows, by which obstacles to "at-one-ment" between men and men and men and God maybe removed.

I will tell you right up front here that my reason for going into this subject in this way is because of what came out in Day of Atonement sermons and writings of the Worldwide Church of God last year. Last year they introduced the thought or the belief that the Azazel is now Christ, not Satan, but Christ. A major part of the reasoning was that the Azazel is seen by them to atone for sin. So we have to lay a groundwork in order to see that this is not so.

If you make a study of the word "atonement" in the Bible, beginning by using a concordance, you will find that the word appears, interestingly, only one time in the New Testament. I did not realize that until this year when I started to look it up and then I found that even that one time in virtually every modern version, including the New King James, the word "atonement" is removed and it does not even appear one time in the New Testament.

Is that not interesting, when everybody knows that Jesus Christ is the Atonement. He is the expiation, He is the payment for our sins and there is hardly a greater, bigger subject in the New Testament than that Christ died for our sins and yet the word "atonement" does not even appear in the Greek.

It appears sixty-nine times in the Old Testament. Where that harsh God seemingly is the one who is carrying on there all the time, but I will say this, that even though the word never appears in the Greek in the New Testament, yet the idea is expressed almost constantly. Once

one gets passed Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John the concept of atonement appears very frequently. It is a very large subject though the word itself never appears.

Isaiah 59:1-2 Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

It is evident from the context that the people had been praying to God and then also complaining that though they are praying, God is not answering. So Isaiah comes with the real reason why there was no answer and that is, it is not that God is not hearing. He is indeed hearing what the people are saying, He is hearing their complaints, that is if one wants to think only of the mechanical aspects of actually hearing the sound, but it makes very clear in verses one and two that God has set His will not to respond.

He is hearing, He is not that far away, but He has set His mind, His will not to respond and the reason that is given is because there is a separation between Israel, the people who are praying, and God. And that the thing that has caused this separation and made God seem as though He is actually very far away—like He cannot hear what they are saying, He is too far away to actually hear—that is not true, Isaiah is saying. He can hear what you are saying but nonetheless Isaiah says, yes there is a separation between you and God and what has caused this separation are your iniquities, your sins.

I wanted to begin at this verse for a specific reason and that is that it is one of the few places in the Old Testament where a separation from God is openly stated. This requires an atoning action be taken if man is going to be right with God. Something has to be able to bridge that gap that exists there.

Even though this is one of the few places where it is actually stated that there is a separation, like atonement or reconciliation in the New Testament, it is something that is constantly implied. In other words it is an idea, it is a concept that is always on the edge of what is being written but is very few times actually openly stated, like it is here.

Now back in the first chapter in Isaiah we see a little bit of the same concept here.

Isaiah 1:10-11 Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom [Sodom being Jerusalem in this case]; give ear to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah: [The implication is that these people are not hearing what the law is saying to them.] "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle.

You see the idea? The thought is very similar to Isaiah 59. In other words God has set His will against something that He has actually commanded. Did He not command the sacrifices? Yes, He did. They are a big part of the book of Leviticus, there are some of them in the book of Deuteronomy and so He has commanded the people to sacrifice, and indeed they are

sacrificing, but now He is coming back and telling them, they do not mean a thing to Me.

It is not really that the sacrifices mean nothing to Him. It is rather a problem with the people making the sacrifices that causes them to be meaningless, both to God and to them, even as their prayers were meaningless. And so He has set His will not to except the offerings that they were making.

Isaiah 1:11-15 I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. "When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? [God is offended.] Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. [A type of prayer.] The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. [There we got it right there. "I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting."] Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.

Understand then that the separation is not real in the sense of distance. The separation exists because these people who are bearing God's name, as it were, they are His people, they have covenanted with Him but they have offended Him through acts of disloyalty in their breaking of His commands and as far as He is concerned the covenant is broken and there is a separation therefore that has to be made up.

So He can hear, but He will not hear because His mind is made up and the reason is because men are giving no indication that, even though they are practicing aspects of His way, they want to be reconciled. Does it not seem logical to you that if they wanted to be reconciled that they would submit to Him? Does it not seem logical that if they wanted to be reconciled they would be obedient to Him? Does it not seem logical that if they wanted to be reconciled to Him that they would come to Him in an attitude of humility, that they would come to Him in an attitude seeking forgiveness?

There is no indication of that in either case where the separation is directly addressed. So they are not upholding their end of the covenant.

Colossians 1:21 And you [speaking this time to Christians], who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by [or through] wicked works, yet now He has reconciled.

The New Testament implies a separation between God and man, it implies it very frequently even though the subject of atonement if not directly named. If we are alienated, if we are enemies, surely a reconciliation has to take place.

Ephesians 2:12 That at that time you were without Christ, being

aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers [that is not close to, not related to] from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

And you cannot be separated from God any further than that verse describes.

The Bible's general approach to man's estrangement from God is that it is a fact without dispute. So therefore it assumes that it is there and there is good reason, I can see why the writers would approach it that way because it is obvious from Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden. They were now separated from the presence of God and so every writer after that just picked up on that and assumed everybody already knew that man is separated from God.

Atonement therefore is needful if God and man are ever going to be brought back together. So the New Testament approaches it in that our disobedience to His will, or sin, has alienated us from God and that somehow it must be remedied if a right relationship is to be restored.

Now back to the Old Testament again. We will begin to look at a variety of uses that the word "atonement" is put to. I want to show you in this section that atonement does not always involve blood or death and that is good to remember when we get to Leviticus 23 and the Azazel goat. The Azazel goat was not slaughtered, the Azazel goat did not die. The Azazel goat did not shed its blood.

Genesis 6:14 "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch.

The usual Hebrew word for, translated into the English "atonement" is "Kahphar." There is only one other word that is translated "atonement" and that is the word "Kippur" or "Yom Kippur." You may be familiar with it, and that one is only translated into the English "atonement" five times. The other sixty-four times it is the word "Kahphar" and "Kippur" incidentally is derived from the same root as "Kahphar."

In the New King James "Kahphar" is translated here in Genesis 6: 14 as, "cover". "Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and Kahphar it...

In the King James I believe it is translated "pitch" or "pitched." The word "pitch" in old English meant, "cover". When you pitch something you cover it. So either word, either translation there is correct.

This is the thought behind how this word developed into its usage as the word "atonement," that is, "Kahphar" means to cover. Here in Genesis 6: 14 it is used in sense of the action, the ark was covered. That was the action, the ark was Kahphared.

So it is used here in the sense of covering and of course the understanding is that because the ark was covered with pitch then it made it seaworthy in the sense that water could not get in and it would not sink. And so they were actually saved because the boat did not take on water and the boat did not sink because it was "Kahphared"—it was covered in every part that was

going to be in the sea.

However by the time you get to Leviticus the word has taken on an additional meaning and, in a way, a more meaningful meaning or usage. Even though the usage "cover" is still there, it has also taken on the meaning of "wipe away" and it is used almost entirely in the sense of what is accomplished rather than the action.

To Judaism the Day of Atonement, I think, became the most important holy day largely because of their history in going into captivity and wandering. This pictured to them their separation from God and their separation from their homeland. So the Day of Atonement added bit of impetus to their separation because they knew, they understood from the Old Testament why they were separated from their homeland. It was because of sins and if they were separated from their homeland, they were also separated from God. And so the idea in Judaism has always been, "Next year in Jerusalem." That somehow through the atonement the separation from God would be bridged and they would be able to begin to go back to their homeland.

It took on an almost entirely national application even though they knew that there was a spiritual application, that sin was involved in their separation. But as far as the Bible is concerned I think I can understand why "wipe away" became the more prominent usage rather than "cover" because merely covering something indicates that whatever it is, that is whatever is covered still exists, it is merely hidden.

It is sort of like sweeping something under a rug. You could cover the wood of the ark with "pitch" but the wood was still there. You could cover sins by a legal decision but in reality the sin was still there in the mind. You see it was still there, but "wipe away" indicates that whatever happened to be there is totally completely gone, dissolved, it is out of the way, it no longer exists, and it is totally dealt with. It is forgotten as well.

In the case of sin, it is pictured in the Bible as something that is foul, filthy, dirty that lies between God and man. It is keeping them separated and man is responsible for this foul thing's existence. The "covering" is then seen as a means of bridging a separation and if it is merely covered it is not dealt with sufficiently to take it from one's conscience and thus guilt remains and the relationship is still being affected.

You will find elements of what I just said in the book of Hebrews, how that Christ wiped everything away, it is gone. It is not merely covered, it is gone, it disappears, but this does not come out clearly until the New Testament and so one has to be careful in reading the Old Testament as to how this word "atonement" is perceived.

The problem with the sacrifices in the Old Testament was that they became merely mechanical operations, which enabled people to feel better about themselves because they did what the law required, but it made no difference in their lives. Is that not what God said in Isaiah 1? Sure, that is exactly what He said. That is what He says in the book of Amos too and that is exactly what He said in Isaiah 59.

By making the offering, the sacrifice, they were in effect sweeping the sins under the rug and what was the proof that they were just being swept under the rug? There was no repentance, there was no change. What did God say, "Your hands are full of blood."

Thus you can begin to understand why "atonement" began to take on the meaning of "wipe away" rather than merely "covering" because covering does not give the picture of dealing with the sins effectively enough so that they will affect a person's conscience and that they will be guilt free.

In Exodus 29: 36 this is a typical application of atonement.

Exodus 29:36 "And you shall offer a bull every day as a sin offering for atonement. You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it.

If you are thinking when you are reading the Bible, you might be led into a measure of confusion by how this word is used. I say this because we almost invariably think of atonement and Christ's death for our sins. In fact I would say that it is ingrained in our minds that death and atonement go hand in hand. There is nothing wrong with that because that is a very valuable truth from God's Word and it is true.

So we connect death and cleansing, death and atonement. They are almost inseparably linked in our thinking, not only because of Christ's death but because we are so familiar with the association here in the book of Exodus, and Leviticus as well.

Is this not true? You think of death and atonement together. But I wonder if you understand that the emphasis in the sacrifices of Leviticus is not on the death of the victim but rather on the giving of a life. There is a monumental difference between the two of them.

What did God want from Israel? He wanted their lives! In repentance, in obedience, He did not want them to die. He did not want them to relate to the sacrifices in that way. He said, "Why would you die, oh Israel?" The emphasis on the sacrifices of Leviticus is on the giving of a life in obedience to God. I hope that you will come to understand that! The burnt offerings symbolize the keeping of the first four commandments.

You shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, with all your soul, with your entire mind, with all of your being. It is the giving of a life in obedience and the last six are pictured by the meal offering, the second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself and the peace offering pictures everybody in communion fellowshiping "at one" with each other.

So the emphasis in the book of Leviticus is not on death but rather on the giving of a life, a life lived! Given to God in obedience. There is a monumental difference between the two of them.

Reconciliation is not effected, that is made to be, merely by a death but because a life was given. Tell me something, would Christ's death have meant anything if He had not first given His life to God entirely? Not at all, it would not have been worth a thing. A sacrifice is only as good as the life that is living it.

So Exodus 29: 36 is simply a typical application of the word translated into the English, "atonement."

Hebrews 9:22 [This is a very important verse to this sermon.] And

according to the law almost all things are purged with blood. . .

Not everything, *almost* everything. The Bible shows that there are purgings, cleansings that pave the way for reconciliation and atonement that are made without the death of a victim too. This is important to understand, not only in a doctrinal way but also in terms of practical application to our Christian lives.

If there is estrangement between a husband and a wife or friends, does somebody have to die in order for reconciliation to be made? Of course not, but yet something has to be done in order for what is standing between the two to be purged, cleansed, covered, or wiped away, does it not? The Bible approaches atonement the same way as it does human atonements that take place.

Not everything is purged by death, not everything is purged by blood. Reconciliations can be effected without the need of death occurring. Again go back to the purpose of this sermon. The Worldwide Church of God is saying that the Azazel goat is now Christ and I am trying to show you that no, it is still Satan and reconciliations can be made, atonements made, without there having to occur a death.

Genesis 32:20 [Jacob is the speaker] "and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob is behind us.' "For he said, "I will appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me."

The "he" is Esau. The word "Kahphar" appears as the word "appease." The word "appease" carries with it at least some of the sense of why atonement is necessary. There is something between Jacob and Esau, is there not? There is a barrier between the two of them.

The Bible views sin as an act of disloyalty against the relationship and because of it the relationship is driven apart and this is why God calls sin fornication and adultery in parts of His Word. Even as fornication or adultery will affect a marriage relationship, so does sin affect the relationship between us and God. It is an act of disloyalty, which drives us apart and because of that, if we happen to be involved in a sin that does drive us from God, then there has to be a reconciliation. There has to be an atonement.

Something, God's anger, if I can put it that way, must be appeased. In this case Jacob expected Esau to be angry because of Jacob's deceitful chicanery and in the stealing of the birthright and also the blessing as well. He was so afraid of Esau at the time that he and his mother conspired together for Jacob to flee back to his mother's land so that Jacob's life would be spared.

I think that is pretty good evidence that Esau was really upset. Here is Jacob coming back, what Jacob did stands between him and Esau. How can he appease, cover, whatever it is that is between them?

Jacob hoped to expiate his guilt and appease, to wipe away, Esau's anger by giving Esau a gift.

Genesis 32:18 "then you shall say, 'They are your servant Jacob's. It

is a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also is behind us."

In this case the gift was material. That which Jacob hoped would cover, expiate, wipe away, what was between them and affect a reconciliation that would lead to atonement, was a material gift that was given to Esau.

I think that it is good to note that though the word "atonement" appears, of course in the Hebrew under the word "appease," there is no mention of forgiveness of sin. I am introducing something else here. Even though "atonement"—appeasement—is effected and it worked, you can tell. You can read the rest of the story, it worked, at least it had a part in making reconciliation. There is no mention of forgiveness of sin.

Proverbs 16:6 In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity;
and by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil.

We are going to look at this in other contexts because it was translated a little bit differently when it appears in another context.

1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent love for one another, for
"love will cover a multitude of sins."

Love covers sins? Does it really mean in this case that our love for a brother will atone for, wipe away, forgive that person's sins? No it does not. There is only one thing that forgives sins, and that is the blood of Jesus Christ, but there are many things by which estrangements, separations can be atoned.

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins.

There is no way that humans can atone for another's sins because sin is against God. Even though we humans are caught in it and sometimes very badly hurt by sin, we cannot atone for another human being's sin. But love is not concerned with exposing other people's sins, but love will cover, it will hide, it will "Kahphar" them.

This does not mean that we take no notice of other people's sins; it merely means that we do not broadcast one's knowledge of people's sins. Love bears these things in silence and thus provides a covering so that others do not see them and it is not spread before everybody else.

That makes reconciliation between people much more possible than it would be if a person's sins were exposed all over the place. A person can forgive another's offense against them but that does not atone for sin in the sense of securing God's forgiveness.

I want to make a distinction between those two. We can forgive another person for what they have done to us, but that does not secure God's forgiveness. That in no way pays the penalty for the offense against us.

Hebrews 9:22 . . . without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.

Do you see what I am heading for here? The Bible shows that atonements can be made amongst people in which an estrangement, a separation, is bridged, but that does not forgive sin. That is something between the sinner and God.

Usually it is the Bible's approach that it is the man who must make atonement to God by offering something which will be thought adequate to make amends for the bad effect. But sometimes it is God who makes the atonement and I think this is kind of interesting.

Now back in Deuteronomy 21:8. The background for this is: someone is found dead in a field, nobody knows who murdered him—if indeed the person was murdered—but the assumption is that the person is murdered and there is nobody who can be accused of the crime and so it was provided for in the laws of Israel by God to provide atonement.

Deuteronomy 21:8 'Provide atonement, O Lord, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.' And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood.

What this is is asking God to cover it. If we take it to its furthest extreme, to just forgive it and God is asked to just, in a sense, almost you might say, overlook it, provide atonement because nothing else can be done.

In II Chronicles 30:18, here Hezekiah was keeping the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread and the people were not clean and Hezekiah prayed to God to make atonement for the people and God did.

Ezekiel 16:60-63 "Nevertheless I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for daughters, but not because of My covenant with you. And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done," says the Lord God."

This appears very frequently. Another one is Psalms 78:38 where the word atonement is translated forgive or forgave.

Psalms 78:38 But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them. Yes, many a time He turned His anger away, and did not stir up all His wrath.

In the final analysis it is God who provides the real covering in every instance through Jesus Christ. But I want us to look at a couple more interesting examples. I want you to get enough of a picture of this so that you see very clearly that death does not always have to be part of an atonement and even atonements in which God Himself was involved.

Exodus 30:12-16 [This is in the building of the Tabernacle and its furniture.] "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the Lord, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the Lord. Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the Lord. The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when you give an offering to the Lord to make an atonement for yourselves. And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for yourselves."

How about those apples? It is almost like you buy the separation clean. You see what I mean, are you beginning to see that atonement does not always involve death, it does not always involve blood.

Exodus 32:30 [This was right after the golden calf incident.] Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

What was he going to do? He was going to pray. So intercessory prayer becomes a means of atonement.

Numbers 16:46 So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun."

So whenever God was offended by what went on, Moses then used the incense. Now let us go on to the Azazel with that background.

Leviticus 16:5, 9-10, 21-22, 26 "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. . . . "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 [or Azazel] into the wilderness. . . . "Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat [this is the Azazel 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 release the goat in the wilderness. . . . "And he who released the goat as the scapegoat [the Azazel] shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp."

I will begin with the last verse. Why did he have to wash himself? Because he was filthy, dirty, symbolically anyway, from having come in contact with the goat that had the sins laid on it. Remember I told you before that not all things are purged with blood. In this case we have a purging by water and a changing of clothes in order that the person can be accepted back into the camp. As long as he is unclean, symbolically unclean, he is separated from the camp and an atonement has to be made in order for him to get back into camp, he is atoned for by water.

The next thing I want you to note is that verse 10 shows that an atonement can be made without blood being shed because the scapegoat—the Azazel goat—was allowed to live and yet it was for an atonement, to make an atonement upon it.

Incidentally this idea that the Azazel is Christ is a very popular teaching in much of liberal Protestantism and I think that one reason for this is that Protestantism is very squeamish about the existence of Satan to begin with and they especially cannot think of an atonement being accomplished except through Christ. But an atonement is accomplished here and it is accomplished by Azazel.

Let us go back to Hebrews 9:22 just to make a connection with this principle once again.

Hebrews 9:22 And according to the law almost all things are purged with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

Are you beginning to see the picture? Atonements can be made with no forgiveness. But reconciliation with God for salvation must have the shedding of blood because that atonement required the forgiveness of sin because that is what separates people from God.

In Ephesians, let us go back there again, remember at that time we were strangers from the commonwealth of Israel and without hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off

have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

I am going through these scriptures so that you will see very clearly that the Azazel goat does not represent Jesus Christ. The goat that represented Christ shed its blood and it is through it, symbolically, that forgiveness, reconciliation, and atonement with God occurs. But it is still possible to have an atonement made without the shedding of blood, but there is no forgiveness through that kind of atonement. I think you can understand that because the Azazel has the sins laid on him, they are not forgiven. The Azazel carries them out to an uninhabited place, still bearing the sins, they are unforgiven.

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies [separated, alienated] we were reconciled, [brought near] to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Now in I Corinthians 11, right in the midst of the Passover instructions there.

I Corinthians 11:25 In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Barkley has a very interesting paraphrase on this and he says that, "this is what it really means, it does not literally say that, but this is what it means. In the same manner he also took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant and it cost me My blood and therefore His life."

Hebrews 10:1-4 For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purged, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For its not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

There is one thing that forgives sin and that is the blood of Jesus Christ. Nothing else can affect the kind of reconciliation and therefore atonement with God in the same manner, to the same degree, to the same depth, to the same purpose as the blood of Jesus Christ. But other atonements can be made using other things.

So we have a clarification then that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin, the Bible is very clear on that point. I could have gone to maybe twenty more scriptures in the New Testament that shows that very clearly. God said to Adam and Eve at the very beginning that, "in the day that you eat thereof [meaning the tree of death], the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you are as good as dead." The only thing that will pay the penalty for what you

have done or will do, Adam and Eve, is death. The wages of sin is death. Jesus Christ had to die in order for forgiveness to occur, so that reconciliation could occur, so that atonement could be made, so that we could be saved.

That is the only way sin can be paid for, the only way it is remitted, canceled out, forgiven, wiped away, dissolved and that is by death.

Leviticus 16:5 . . . two kids of the goats as a sin offering.

Both were sin offerings, one died, one did not. The one that died pays for sin, the one that did not, did not die but yet an atonement is made.

Leviticus 16:9-10 "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.

Back to verse 8 because there is something I want to pick up there.

Leviticus 16:8 "Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat [Azazel]."

The way that the Hebrew is stated there makes it exceedingly clear that even as the Lord is a living and personal Being, Azazel also has to be a living and personal being. That is an important comparison between the two. Azazel is a living entity, even as the Lord is a living entity; one represented the Lord, the other represented Azazel.

Virtually every commentary that I have looked into, and I have not found a single commentary yet, that has not failed to identify Azazel as an evil demon or even a chief of demons. This does not mean that they do not consider other possibilities. What I am saying is that they all mention this one thing consistently and they almost invariably refer to the Jews by saying that the Jews believe that this indeed is Satan that is being referred to here. The one who is the chief of a kingdom of demons.

This Azazel, as we can understand from other portions of the Bible, is not involved in people's sins in that he makes people sin. He does not make people sin, but rather he works through deception and people choose to sin. It is their sins, but he is involved, even as he was involved with Adam and Eve's sin. He was involved in the sense that he deceived them, tricked them so that they chose to sin. But the sin was nonetheless theirs because the death penalty came upon them.

That is the pattern that is established right at the beginning of the Book so that we can all understand that there is no way, there is no power in Satan to make you and me sin! Sometimes that is a hard nut to swallow because we would like to be able to blame somebody else and make a scapegoat out of him. But we are the ones that choose to sin.

God is, of course, cognizant of the fact that Satan is a master deceiver and that we arrive in the world with our minds in a state whereby he is able to take advantage of our ignorance of him, ignorance of God. And indeed he does take advantage of it and he manages to deceive us into sin. He has deceived the whole world.

Revelation 12:9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

That Azazel is lead, he has sins pronounced over him, all the sins of Israel are pronounced over him and I think that we can safely assume that since we are a part of spiritual Israel, we are the Israel of God according to Galatians 6:16.

Our sins are also cast upon both Christ and upon Satan as we see here, the Azazel, and those sins that are cast upon him, he has hands laid on him and then he is lead off to a desolate place. This is kind of interesting to do a little research on because in the Hebrew it means a place not connected by road to any other place. In other words the goat was not to find its way back.

In five different places in the scriptures they identify desolate places as being the habitations of demons. Here is one in Matthew so you get the sense of it.

Matthew 12:43 "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none.

Dry places, desolate places are regarded by the Scriptures as images or metaphors of desolation and death. That of course corresponds to the nature of demons.

Both of these goats are truly sin offerings, by both we are delivered from all sins and transgressions. But the one on whom the Lord's sacred lot fell was sacrificed, and by the shedding of its blood our sins were wiped out signifying forgiveness and then the animal is burned.

It was burned—thus signifying a complete blotting out, dissolving, and turning it into ashes. Something that would blow away and never be seen again, so that they were completely gone, a thing of the past, disappeared, out of the mind, forgotten. And it is by this death that separation from God is bridged, the sin is removed, and a living fellowship established with Him is restored.

So it is absolutely necessary for blood to be shed and death to occur if reconciliation is to be perfectly secured.

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

It is a little bit different metaphor but it fits with the symbolism involved in the Azazel and the

leading him off to a desolate place. The absolute and total deliverance from sin and its author (Who is the author of sin? Satan is.), is then symbolized in the leading away of the goat laden with sins into the desert from which it cannot return. This goat is a sin offering only in the sense that it is laden with the sins of the people to carry them into the desert, in no way is it a payment for sin. That is not even alluded to anywhere. But it does carry them, it bears them.

Another factor to consider is that Christ died for those who repent and sin then is forgiven through His shed blood. Azazel—Satan—will not repent, his sins are not covered. His sins are not forgiven and therefore when the sins of Israel are put on his head, what he is receiving on his own head is just recompense for what he has instigated through his deceptions and his failure to repent.

Why are two animals used then instead of one? Remember that these things are figures of spiritual truths and because of the physical impossibility of combining all of the features of how God deals with sin, things had to be set forth, if we are going to understand, in two animals, not one.

God's justice is a perfect match for His mercy. He is not going to allow Satan and his demons to escape responsibility for what they have done. As far as sin is concerned, He is an, "in your face God." He is not going to let Satan escape responsibility and so he has then those sins put on his head and he is lead to a desolate place from which he cannot return.

This of course is the time when he is thrown into the lake of fire in Revelation 20. So God is not negligent in fulfilling His responsibility of Governor of His creation and He does not overlook our sins either. The very fact that the Azazel goat is driven out to not return shows that God will not abide sin.

The cause of man's estrangement from God is our sin, our persistent disobedient to God's will, and in spite of His great mercy He cannot treat sin as if it did not matter because it degrades human life and it thwarts God's purpose in reproducing Himself in us. For if we live the old ways His image will not be in us.

With these symbolic rituals God shows reconciliation is made through Christ so that man can be at-one-ment with God. And He shows that His perfect justice is also satisfied in that the one ultimately responsible is also dealt with in that sin. The cause of separation is totally banished from everyone's presence.

Hebrews 4:14-16 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Carry that thought into Hebrews 10.

Hebrews 10:19-25 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the

Holiest [the Holy of Holies] by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

If there is anything else—perhaps the most important thing of all that is contained within the teaching of the Day of Atonement—it is something that is not directly mentioned in Leviticus 16, but we have just read of it right here and it is directly connected to the sacrifice of Christ. That the true end or goal of worship of God is not reached until the worshipper has free access into the most Holy of the Most High; that is when you are in His presence.

What is Atonement? It is the means of reconciliation. What is Atonement? It is the condition or state achieved through reconciliation. And that reconciliation which enables us into the very presence of God from which flows all of His grace, all of His gifts, beginning with His calling, beginning with His mercy and forgiving and continuing right on through every gift that He gives us to enable us to be in His Kingdom. Every bit of it comes because we have access into the Holy of Holies of the Most High God through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Yes, the Azazel was an atonement, but only in that he atoned by carrying the sins off to where they could never return to us.