

Don'T Disregard Satan!

He's Still on the Prowl

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I do not want to sound like Martin Luther King, Jr., but I had a dream. This was during the early morning hours about a month ago. I would like to tell it to you only because it has a little bearing on what I want to speak about today.

My dreams, being the dullard that I am, are not usually very vivid. However, this one was in color, let me tell you! Typically, I tend not to remember my dreams. I wake up, and they are gone. That is how my memory is, too. Tell me something, and it is gone. This one was vivid, though. I can still replay it in my mind one month later, and this makes it quite unusual for me.

In this dream, I was here in the office on a normal workday. Everything was going on swimmingly. I needed to see my dad about something, so I walked through the office to where he was working. What was weird was that instead of being in his office in the front right of the building, his desk, credenza, filing cabinets, and all the rest of his furniture was set up here in the meeting hall, back there toward the front doors. The hall chairs were still set up as for Sabbath services, but they were not set up quite in this configuration. My dad's desk and stuff was set up back there in the corner near the doors—except they were not the front doors that you can see there.

You know how things can change in your dreams from moment to moment. The doors had changed into one regular door with a latch. These real doors here do not latch. They just swing freely, stopping at the jamb. I walked through that one single door and went over to my dad's desk, but he was not there. He was across the room, over here on this side, standing in front of a table and doing something there, oblivious that I was even there in the room. He was concentrating on the job, which is normal for him, anyway.

Suddenly, a movement in the room caught my attention, over here at the side door. It is the door that we very rarely open. People normally do not use that door. Suddenly, two male adult lions were standing there. They just suddenly appeared inside the room.

I scrambled back around the desk toward the door, and the lions began to move, walking in line, one behind the other, toward the front door where I was. They were walking across the back of the hall, took a few steps, and then they turned down a small aisle between the chairs and the table that dad was standing at, and he was still working

at what he was doing. Then they went toward my dad's desk, which I was still somewhat behind.

They totally ignored my dad, and he totally ignored them, as if they could not see him, nor he them. At this point, I was just standing there, my mouth gaping, wondering what was going on, trying to make sense of this dream. I was now slowly inching backwards toward the door. I was not going to leave dad to his death, because I knew that they could not see him, and he could not see them. They seemed to be totally ignorant of each other. However, both lions were focused solely upon me.

The lead lion, after he had come down the aisle and made a little turn, jumped upon dad's desk and went the length of his desk, and then stepped up to his credenza and went the length of the credenza, right toward me. The lion that was behind the first lion did the exact same thing. I was pretty much at the door at this point. I had run a few steps. You know how distances are. I probably ran a mile between the desk and the door, and it was actually only a few steps—but in a dream, you know, things are just weird. I ran to the door, and I had a mind to put it between them and me. The lions continued to pace toward me unhurriedly. They were stalking me.

I opened the door, stepped through, slammed the door shut behind me—at least, that is what I planned to do, because the door would not latch. It had changed again. The door was still a single door; however, it was an inch too narrow for the doorway! The latch could not catch on anything and hold the door shut. It certainly was not going to lock.

There I was, on the other side of the door, able to peer through that inch-wide gap (it looked more like a chasm than a one-inch gap) between the door and the jamb. I could still see the lions coming toward the door. Then, they were there. I could see them. I took one last look through the gap, while holding the door, trying to keep it shut. I looked through with my left eye, because I was holding as much of myself behind the door as I could. On the very other side of the door, just inches away from my eye, was this bright green lion's eye—and he was staring right at me!

Then I woke up!

It took me that long. It would have been great if it had stopped before that, maybe while I was scrambling toward the door or something, but it had to go to the point where I was looking eye to eye with the lion. The dream was unsettling to say the least. I woke up, and it took me quite a while to get back to bed.

Upon thinking about it, I took it as a warning. I took it as a warning that Satan and his

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demons are still prowling, and they have targeted members of the church of God. This is serious because we are fast approaching the end of this age, when demon activity is going to increase once again. We cannot and dare not afford to leave Satan out of our calculations as we prepare for the Kingdom of God.

Since today is the Day of Atonement, I want you to turn to Leviticus 23 and read what God has given us in His Word regarding this day.

Leviticus 23:26-32 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "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 manner of work; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. It shall be to you a sabbath of solemn rest [or better, a Sabbath of Sabbaths], and you shall afflict your souls; on the ninth day of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall celebrate your sabbath."

This is not the first mention of the Day of Atonement in Scripture. What we have in Leviticus 23 is the official listing of all the holy days and God's instruction for the Israelites in general. This day, as we see in verse 27, is named the Day of Atonement.

If we could see the Hebrew under it, it would say *Yom Kippur*, which the Jews use to this day. This Hebrew word *kippur* means "covering over." Originally, the word had an idea of covering, because the first use of it is found in Genesis where Noah had to cover the ark with pitch. We should not think of this covering over in terms of sin. Rather, "covering over" is all the Hebrew base word meant.

This day is one of propitiating or a day of atoning. The Hebrew root *kapar* strongly suggests atoning by offering a substitute or redeeming, where something is done on behalf of another. The whole idea means that there has been a substitutionary giving of something on behalf of another. That is the first thing I wanted to point out here in this passage.

The second thing is that we are to have a holy convocation, a sacred gathering or meeting where we are called together and set apart. Thus, here we are. We are having

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this holy convocation right now. We have been called together to hear the message and to fellowship with one another.

We are also to afflict our souls today. We all know what that means. We are fasting all day long, since last night, until this evening. This is to be humbled to the point of repentance, where we really understand how much we really need God, how much we owe God, how He is there supporting us all the time, how much He has done for us, and how much we owe everything to Him. He is our very life, and we afflict our souls to remind ourselves of this condition.

We should be humbled to know that we are only a breath or drink or bite of food away from death. If we should not get another drink or bite of food or breath of air, we will die. God has made it all possible by being a God of providence, supplying all our need.

We should also understand that we are not to work at all on this day—no work at all. He says that if we do work, He will destroy us from among His people. This is a day in which we are to really concentrate on the fact that we are not supposed to work, under penalty of death.

Let us consider these four points in a bit more depth.

1. THIS IS A DAY OF ATONEMENT AND REDEMPTION

We are to remember on this day that we have been saved. We are to remember that our God gave up everything in terms of His glory. He came to this earth as a servant—like one of us, as it were (Philippians 2). His purpose was to come and leave us an example.

Finally, He gave His life and shed His blood for our sins. That was His redeeming sacrifice: that He remitted our sins by giving His precious blood for us. It was an act of self-sacrifice that we in no way deserve, because we are sinners through and through, and we are guilty as charged. The judgment has to be paid. Instead, He gave Himself for us out of love for us, because He wants us with Him in His Kingdom. It was by this precious life that He redeemed us from sin, from this world, and from Satan the Devil, saving us from eternal death. It is particular to us, because we are the ones that God has called through Jesus Christ. Thus, we of all people should be most appreciative, and we are under obligation for this great act of self-sacrifice and love toward us.

On this day, as differentiated from the Passover, the emphasis is on how widespread

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this redemption is. We take this personally, obviously, because it was for us. He did it for each one of us, but the Day of Atonement has a much broader scope: He did this for all Israel; He did this for *all mankind*—those who would be saved, those who would be called. Everybody will be given an opportunity at some point, and that same sacrifice that works so efficaciously for each one of us will be just as efficacious for everyone of them on the outside, all who are willing to accept it when they are called. It is not just that He did it once for us; rather, He did it once for **all**, just as it says in the book of Hebrews. That blood is so precious that it covers every sin of everyone of all time.

2. WE ARE TO GATHER IN HOLY CONVOCATION

This symbolizes our unity under God, that we are all in one place and listening to one message, because it also symbolizes the unity of teaching. If you will remember, it says in I Corinthians 1:10 that Paul wanted us all to speak the same thing. We are to hear the same thing and speak the same thing, have the same understanding, and move forward in unity—God's unity. We gather together to hear instruction inspired by God. We are also here to edify one another in the pursuit of our common goal, which is the Kingdom of God. There is great strength and protection in this unity, hearing the same thing and speaking about the same ideas and subjects. That way, we can all move forward together.

There can be true unity only under God. Therefore, on the Day of Atonement, when we are in this attitude of humility, when we are at-one with one another and with God, as we are gathered together, He can teach us all the same thing.

3. WE ARE TO AFFLICT OUR SOULS

Fasting is an act of humility and self-sacrifice. We are doing in type a similar thing to what Jesus Christ did. His self-sacrifice was an act of humility and love.

Afflicting our souls is commanded so that we would be put into the right attitude. The attitude that God wants to see in us through afflicting our souls is the attitude of "poor in spirit." Do you remember what it says at the end of that beatitude? It says,

Matthew 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

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Think of that in terms of the Day of Atonement. The purpose of this day is to get us to the point of being poor in spirit. The next thing is the Kingdom of God. Does that not fit the entire sequence of the holy days perfectly? The very next holy day after today is the Feast of Tabernacles, which symbolizes God's Kingdom on the earth—the thousand years of Christ's reign. If we achieve the attitude of poor in spirit, we are in the right attitude for the Feast of Tabernacles.

When we are denying our flesh and humbly coming before our God to supply our needs, God is then able to work with us the most and the best to prepare us for entrance into His Family. This attitude of being poor in spirit is what we are supposed to have the whole year round; but right before the Feast of Tabernacles, He gives us a holy day in which we are made to face ourselves and realize just where we are in comparison to Him and how much we owe to Him. Once we really understand that we are indeed lacking and needy and are humbled by it, then we can be prepared for God's Kingdom in the proper way.

4. WE ARE TO DO NO WORK

In 2005, I gave a Day of Atonement sermon titled, "A Day Without Work," when I went into this subject a great deal more. I want to touch on it again today.

The gist of that sermon is that our not working on this day illustrates that God redeems us without any work on our part. That redemption was done *gratis*; it is purely by grace. If we try to justify ourselves through works, all we earn is the death penalty, because we could never do it. It would never work. Trying to justify oneself will always end up on the negative side of the ledger. One is always going to end up owing God something. It does not work. We just end up paying for our own sins, somehow, and then we die. We must realize that the justification that was given to us—the redemption and the atonement—was all His. We do not deserve it.

This day forces us to focus on God's work for us and, ultimately, for the benefit of everyone. Remember I said that this day is really much broader than just us. There are millions and billions of people that will eventually have that very same redemption.

We need to keep these four points in mind. They are at least things that we need to keep in the backs of our minds as we factor Satan and his efforts against us into this Day of Atonement and the process of salvation through which we are currently going.

We are going to go to that first mention of Atonement in the Bible. I want you to see

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when this takes place and this passage mentions outright three of these same four points.

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."

In this first passage, the only point missing is the holy convocation, but it is understood that all the holy days have or are holy convocations.

Leviticus 16:5-6 "And he [Aaron] 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 for his house."

He had to do that before he could do anything else because, as the offerer, he had to make sure that he was clean first.

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 release the goat in the wilderness."

This chapter explains the Old Covenant ritual that was to be performed on this Day of Atonement every year. We did not go over every little bit this time, such as all the ways that Aaron was to make atonement for this, for that, and for something else. He did all those things because sin touches everything, and it all had to be atoned for before all the sins could be forgiven and these things could be presented before God and everything could be wiped clear. He had to atone for the holy place, the altar, for this, that, and the other thing. I guess they needed a bull and all the rest so that there was enough blood for sprinkling everything. Everything had to be atoned for. I suppose that most of that actually was atoned for with the goat's blood; but, even so, the point is that there was much to be atoned for on that day.

This holy day is never directly named here as the Day of Atonement as it is in Leviticus 23, but the phrase *make atonement* is mentioned sixteen times in this one chapter. That is half of all the times this phrase appears in the whole Old Testament. The idea of atonement is the obvious subject of this event and festival—the idea that God's justice has to be satisfied through a substitutionary sacrifice. It is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for everyone, and the Lord's goat typifies this.

We already understand that the word *kapar* in Hebrew has the connotation of a substitutionary sacrifice. There is another idea behind this word, as well, and it is *reconciliation*. If you would go into a Hebrew lexicon of some sort, you would probably not find this definition there, because the word for "covering" (*kapar*) does not necessarily mean, in itself, "reconciliation." If you are just going to be literal, it means "atonement" and "covering"; but the idea of reconciliation is there, because that is what atonement accomplishes. It is the *result* of atonement. Reconciliation is a result of redemption and atonement. What happens is that Christ's sacrifice of His blood, giving Himself in love for our sins, satisfies God's righteous requirement that sin be paid for. Sin must be paid for and covered, because He cannot stand it. Something has to be done to pay for that. Christ's sacrifice, His precious blood as God, will do that.

Once the sin is covered, once the sin is paid for, then reconciliation results. The separation, which sin accomplishes between God and man, has been done away with. Because man is now clean, he can approach God through Christ, through the blood. That separation, then, is removed. It says in Romans 5:10 that God and man are reconciled through the blood of Jesus Christ. We are brought together once again.

In the Garden, when man sinned, cherubim were placed there at the edge of the Garden of Eden so they could not come back. There was a separation between where God was and where they were. It is only when we accept Christ's blood covering our

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sins that we can actually go and meet God again as human beings. At that point, the angel with the flaming sword is taken away, and we can enter into God's presence once again. God and man, through the sacrifice of Christ, are at-one again. Not only is the sin atoned for, but the result of the atonement is reconciliation. Things are even again, not at odds.

This ritual that we read about in Leviticus 16 includes two goats. One goat is the Lord's, offered as a sin offering, and another one which represents Azazel. In the King James Version and the New King James Version, it is rendered "scapegoat," and this is a bad translation. In English, it means "a goat that departs or escapes." If you use the definition of "a goat that escapes" or if you use the modern idea of a scapegoat, who is someone who is unjustly made to pay for other people's crimes, you do not get the original intended meaning. Azazel is not innocent. He is not unjustly given all the sins of the people. The idea of a scapegoat to a modern person does not mean what it meant in 1611. Back then, it might have been closer to what actually happens with Azazel.

For us moderns, the way that this comes out in Hebrew, the scholars tell me, is that it is obviously a personal name. The construction of the Hebrew for, "for the Lord," is exactly the same for, "for Azazel." Thus, the one for the Lord is slain for a sin offering, a type of Christ's sacrifice for sin; the goat for Azazel is presented alive before God, and the sins of the people are placed on its head. If you notice verse 21—"all the iniquities of the children of Israel, all their transgressions, concerning all their sins"—God makes sure that He covers everything, all the sins. Nothing is left out. All the transgressions of Israel are placed on the head of this goat for Azazel. Then, that goat is taken into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man, someone who has been charged with this as his duty. What this shows and symbolizes is the guilt for all of our sins being attributed to their ultimate source. It is being put back onto the head of the one who influenced us: Satan the Devil.

The name *Azazel* has something to do with the goat, because the Hebrew root for *goat* is present in this word. It is thought that Azazel was a personal name for Satan at that time, a pagan deity. Azazel can be traced back to Satan the Devil. Let us look at the New Testament Azazel type in Revelation 20.

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 set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released

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for a little while.

Revelation 20:7-10 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet were. And he will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The angel with the key to the bottomless pit corresponds with the "suitable man" in Leviticus 16 who leads the Azazel goat—Satan—into the wilderness. In this case, Satan goes into the bottomless pit, and it is shut and sealed so he cannot get out for a thousand years. As we go through this, we see that Satan is later thrown into the lake of fire as punishment for his horrendous sins—all the things that he has done against both God and man. Where this place of Satan's final restraint is, we do not know. It does not say. I do not think it is on the earth, because it tells us that the earth will be cleansed with fire. Besides, God is going to dwell on the earth Himself—the Father—and He will not dwell anywhere near where Satan and sin are. He will not abide it.

Some have thought that it is someplace in outer space, in some deepest, darkest region of the universe—maybe a black hole. I do not know. It is something that God has kept to Himself and not given us, but it is interesting to speculate upon once in a while.

Remember those four things to keep in the back of your mind? When Satan is released and Gog and Magog are deceived and come up against the camp of the saints and the Holy City, what happens? It says that fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. Did you notice that no human being raised a finger to fight them? It is a day of no work. God did it. God completely erases Gog and Magog by Himself. It is just an interesting little thought to notice some of these things throughout the whole scenario.

This binding of Satan has not occurred yet. Christ has defeated Satan, as we saw in Martin Collins's sermon. The King has defeated Satan. The King, Jesus Christ, our High Priest, has been exalted to the Father's right hand, and He is there helping us as our mediator. He gives us the strength. He supplies us with God's Holy Spirit. Things are looking up—but Satan is still at large. You might say that he has been judged and

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sentenced but not yet incarcerated. The sentence has not been completely fulfilled yet. He is given a bit of liberty between the time of his defeat and the time of his imprisonment.

His current holding facility is the earth, where we live. II Peter 2:4 tells us that the angels who sinned were bound with chains of darkness right here on the earth. Isaiah 14:12 and Ezekiel 28:17 tells us that Satan was cast to the ground. Where is that? The earth. Revelation 12, in the passage where Satan and his demons fought and Michael and his angels fought and there was war in heaven, tells us that Satan was cast to the earth.

This totally wicked, crazed, maniac, killer, demon-being is still among us. He still enjoys a measure of freedom, whatever God allows. His every thought and intent of his heart is evil continually, just as it says there in Genesis 6 regarding Satan's inspiration of mankind. His goal is to pervert and destroy the regenerated children of God.

We are not sure if this has occurred yet, but it may have:

Revelation 12:7-12 And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 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. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time."

When that crazed, homicidal maniac has great wrath, you do not want to be anywhere around. However, it is something that we have to face.

We know that this will happen sometime before the end of this age, perhaps just before the Great Tribulation. I do not know. The time markers are vague. The time of the end, however, will be a time of aggressive demonic activity, because Satan and his demons are cast down from heaven, with no place there any longer. Then they know, because it

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has happened, that they only have a very short time to get their work done, and they are going to step it up as much as God allows.

Most of that aggressive demonic activity will be directed at God's church. It says here, "the inhabitants of the earth and sea," but we will see in this next passage that it is especially those who hold the testimony of Christ.

Revelation 12:17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Who could that be? If we believe that the woman is Israel, there is a flood that comes and helps the woman (verses 14-16). That enrages Satan the Devil, and on whom does he pick? The ones who are keeping God's law and following Jesus Christ's testimony. There is going to come a time, if it has not started already, when we will be walking around with spiritual targets on our backs. We already are, but it will be intensified to the point where it is going to be noticeable.

Notice the three steps to overcoming Satan given in verse 11. First, they trusted in Christ's atoning sacrifice. Is that not interesting? They trusted in the blood of the Lamb, which we are discussing today. It was given by grace to reconcile us to God and to allow us to have a deep relationship with Him, and that is why it works. If we have the humble attitude of realizing our obligation because of this great sacrifice that was done for us and then we use it—remember the obvious result of the sacrifices: reconciliation with God—we can come before Him. Then the result of all that is that we can know God, and He can know us.

Why does this work? Because we are the apple of God's eye. We are following in the process that He is given us and opened up to us. Being close to God through the blood of Jesus Christ is a wonderful thing, and it can shield us a great deal from what Satan throws at us.

The second thing is that they testified—"by the word of their testimony"—they witnessed the truth of God in their own lives. They did not just believe in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They did not just believe that they have been reconciled to God, but they also practiced what God had given them by opening up their minds to Him. They testified of it in their own lives. They lived it.

The third thing is that they denied themselves. They did not love their lives unto death.

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They did not cling to their own lives; they did not cling to their life unto death. There are some people who will do anything to survive. They will cut throats, lie, steal, or whatever they think it takes. These people who overcame Satan did not take that approach, though. They were willing to give their lives. When we deny ourselves, we exhibit the love of God. What did He do? He is the perfect example. When He came down to this earth, He gave Himself for us all the time in every act that He did. He was giving. He was giving of Himself.

How many times do we read in the gospel accounts that He was tired, that He needed to get away from the crowds because He was just exhausted? We know that one time while on the Sea of Galilee during a storm, He was so tired that He was sleeping through it on that boat. He had done so many healings and castings out of demons, preaching all day long; He did not cling to His life. He certainly felt all the things that we feel, but He was willing to give His life unto death. That is why He came, and He fulfilled that right to the very end. This is the way of being poor in spirit. God is teaching us these three attitudes here on the Day of Atonement: being in great humility; sensing the obligation of Christ's atoning sacrifice for us, the obligation to live this way and testify before the whole world of what we have been taught and given; and denying ourselves and our flesh, to be willing die rather than in any way recant or deny Him. This is the way of the poor in spirit.

It is interesting that the lions in my dream were absolutely quiet. They did not roar. They just stalked. That was scary. I do not know if it would have been scarier if they had roared. My Ambassador-College-inspired margin says that lions roar when they are about to strike. I do not know if that is true or not.

I Peter 5:8-9 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.

There we are, all together, getting the same instruction and the same persecution. What unity!

When Satan is cast down before the end, he will be focused on us. The reason he is focused on us, stalking us, walking about like a roaring lion, trying to devour us, is that the people of this world, as we saw above, are already in his pocket. He has already deceived them. All they need to do is stay put in the world. They are occupied by all the things that he has designed for them to keep them distracted doing evil and sinning.

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Thus, he does not need to do anything with them. They are his already—at least at this point.

He has deceived this whole world, but these pitiful few whom God has called to salvation have escaped him. Those are the ones he wants to get back to him. Why should he stalk those who are already committed to him? He leaves them alone. He would like nothing better than to recapture and devour a child of God, who was once his slave and is now freed by God's calling and the blood of Christ. That is why he is focused on us around the world.

Peter gives four pieces of advice on which we will dwell for the remainder of the sermon.

BE SOBER:

Be self-controlled. This is the meaning of the Greek. Be self-controlled. Think about it. If we keep on the straight and narrow, if we do not give in to temptation, Satan will have nothing to grab onto. What he wants is to grab onto our occasional forays off the path. He wants to make them more than occasional. He wants to make them true deviations, and he wants us to get as far down those deviations as he can so that we cannot make our way back to the path of righteousness. He wants us to get out on the fringe of the group and to start sidling toward the edge where we can be picked off. If we stay in the center of the path, neither to the left or the right, he will not have anything to grab onto—where he might have entry into our minds and lives and make things worse.

I Corinthians 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

This is the way that we are supposed to be; we are supposed to be self-disciplined. We must train for this race we are in—this marathon—with a purpose. We have to practice the life of Christ with an iron will to receive God's good pleasure. If we are not practicing with all we have, if our mind is not concentrating on what we are doing and what we are trying to achieve, we are going to get distracted, lag, and get off our personal regimens, not eating right (thinking spiritually). Something is going to get into our system that will cause us to be weak.

Any departure from God's way should be strictly and swiftly eliminated because those are the things that Satan can grab onto. We have to be disciplined. We have to be self-controlled. That is what Jesus Christ said, is it not? Those who enter the Kingdom of God have to walk the strait and narrow, coming in through the strait gate, the narrow gate—not the wide one.

BE VIGILANT:

Be watchful! You cannot let your guard down—ever! We have to be aware that, as a roaring lion or as a lion stalking his prey, he is hidden, camouflaged! He is waiting for us to walk by. We do not know where he might be, but he is likely to spring out at us at any time. He is looking for a point when we are off our guard. He is more likely to strike when we have forgotten about him, when we are not mindful of him.

When we are distracted about something, we must always factor him into any kind of trial that comes up. He might not be in the middle of it, but he may be pulling some strings at the edge of it or certainly looking for opportunities. If we are not careful and do not react to the trial properly, he will make it worse.

In the midst of the section where Jesus Christ goes into the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, He asked three of His disciples to come along and sit with Him awhile. Peter, James, and John went with Him, and He began to pray and to be in deep distress because of what was coming. He knew the trial that was awaiting Him, that it was starting. In the book of John, it tells us that He knew that Satan had entered Judas Iscariot already, and He sent Satan out to do what he had to do. Later, He knew that the hour had come, and He was preparing to face the trial.

Mark 14:37-38 Then He came and found them sleeping [not being watchful], and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour [not very long]? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing [ready], but the flesh is weak."

That is what we have got to guard against: our weak flesh. I know that all of us say to ourselves, "I'm going to be watchful for Satan the Devil. I'm going to keep my guard up so I won't be surprised. God, give me the strength to do this!" What always seems to drag us down, though? The flesh! We give in to our flesh.

What is today? This is the Fast, when we are commanded for a day not to give in to our flesh. Our flesh is crying out by this time for water. That is what I would like most right

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now because my tongue seems to want to stick to every part of my mouth. Saliva does not quench the thirst at all. We also want food. We want to eat. We want to feel good. Our flesh is crying out to us, "Pay me some attention! I need what you can give me!" When we are listening to that, we are distracted.

Satan has another opportunity at that point if he so chooses (and God so allows) to give us a different attitude by saying, "Well, maybe God didn't mean all day! Maybe He meant just most of 24 hours. Maybe at 6:30, only about a half-hour before the Sabbath is over, I could, you know, go out to the restaurant and nibble on a crouton," or, "Maybe if I brushed my teeth again, maybe a little water will accidentally go down my throat." We have all thought things like that, I am sure. However, when we are like this and thinking about our flesh, we are not thinking about the spiritual darts and arrows that could be flung at us at that moment. It is our flesh that is the weak area.

The spirit is very willing! "Yeah, God! I'm going to be the best Christian ever! Well, just after I do this one thing, because. . ." We do things and give ourselves justification for not denying ourselves, and thereby give Satan an open opportunity to sting us by any of his devices. If we sleep, as His disciples, and give in to the fleshly weaknesses, there is a good chance that our position of standing will be overrun.

RESIST HIM:

Oppose Satan at every opportunity. We have to fight back against him. We cannot be passive. Even any rear-guard action we might take has to be aggressive, because he is not going to be passive. He is going to come at us with everything that God allows him to throw. We have to resist him, oppose him, fight back, and never give an inch. If we allow Satan with his sinful works to even get a toehold in any area of our lives, he is going to scratch and claw and make that toehold a handhold. Then, he will get his whole arm in, and he is going to keep on coming. Satan is not ever going to quit. This is the kind of enemy that we face. We must keep on fighting and running at the same time. We must resist him.

This war that we are in is not something like shaking hands, and it is over. This is total war. Resist him! Do it with everything you have. You cannot yield at any time. You cannot surrender. If you do, you are done—forever. *Surrender* is not in your vocabulary; it is not an option.

Ephesians 5:8-9 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth).

This sounds much like what we read in Revelation 12, when they overcame him with the blood of the Lamb, and they overcame him with the testimony—their witness—of living God's way.

Ephesians 5:10-14 [Proving] finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship [NO FELLOWSHIP—NO—NONE—NADA—NOTHING] with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose [reveal] them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

If we have not been watchful, we need to wake up! Start shining the light of truth on the darkness that is crowding around us. That is what Jesus Christ did. That is one of the most vivid parts of His temptation by Satan the Devil.

Satan said, "You can make bread. You are the Son of God." Jesus Christ said, "The scriptures said that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." So Satan gives Him another temptation, and what does Jesus do? He quotes Scripture again, "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." Satan gives Him yet another temptation. What does Christ say? He quotes Scripture. Every time He was tempted with something, He immediately shone the light of God's Word and truth on it.

"Hey Satan! Did you forget this? This is the truth! I am going to stand in the truth, and I am going to live by the truth. Get out of here. You can't tempt Me. I have the truth! I am going to expose your darkness and lies with the truth." It is a great piece of advice from Christ and from Peter: resist him, oppose him with the truth.

BE STEADFAST IN THE FAITH:

Stand firm in the faith! I have separated this from "Resist Him" because a wishy-washy Christian makes a nice crunchy snack for Satan.

We have to know what God teaches in His Word and never waver! Never! Ever! Be steadfast like a rock! Peter was a pebble or stone, as his name meant, but who was the *Petra*? Jesus Christ, the Rock! There was no moving Jesus Christ. When Satan came against Him, He stood firm in the faith. Satan had to get behind Him.

We cannot let passing fads, worldly philosophies, or cunning false teachers move us from the faith once delivered to the saints. That is why Jude wrote that book. He said, "I was going to talk to you about different things, but I had to write this letter to you, now, to tell you to keep the faith."

Jude 3-4 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness [licentiousness] and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Take this verse as written directly to you.

What is this world turning to? Licentiousness. Secularism. New Age. Various other kinds of quasi-, pseudo-spiritual religious ideas and philosophies. Does that not sound like, "Turned the grace of our God into licentiousness, and deny the only Lord God, and His Son Jesus Christ?" They are there, in the world. If they are there in the world, then they will be in the church. You must stand firm in the faith and never waver, because God's truth is non-negotiable. It was given once, Jude says, once delivered to the saints. If anybody comes to you and says that he has some sort of new truth and revelation, that God is speaking to him something that you can show from God's Word is not true, then you had better oppose him. That is what you have been called to do, to be steadfast in the faith.

Ephesians 6:10-13 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.

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Stand firm in the faith. Once you have God's truth, once you know that you know, hold your position! Stand! After you have done everything, keep standing! Give up not even one inch of ground. God forbid there would come another time of uncertainty like there was under Joseph Tkach, but we can be certain that Satan will attempt it again—and with more effort than the last time—in the days to come to shake you from your foundation. It may not be the same as what happened in Worldwide Church of God, but he is going to try to get you to take a step back. Stand firm in the faith!

James 4:7-10 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Notice the positivity there. However, it is all based on being humble and submitting to God.

This short passage seems to draw all that I have been trying to say today into a neat package. We are learning to submit to God, and He promises to fight our battles for us. If we would just resist Satan, with God's backing, the Devil will flee from us. He will run. He cannot stand before the faith and the faithful backed by the power of the great God of this universe. He has to give ground to Him. The key is humility. That is what we are learning today.

Draw near to God. Cleanse your hands. These are your actions. Purify them. Also purify your heart, your attitudes, and the way that you think. Be sober minded. Be self-controlled. Be humbled, and He, despite Satan and his devices, will bring us through these evil days and exalt us in His Kingdom.

Have a good Day of Atonement. Do these things so that we can all be together as one in the Kingdom of God.