

Atonement And This World'S Future

Day of Atonement

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Most people today, who believe that there is a devil, think that Jesus Christ and the devil are in a tug-of-war battle for control over mankind. If this were true, Satan would be winning. But nothing could be farther from the truth! Christ has already won victory over the devil. We are looking forward to the time when Satan will be put in chains.

Nevertheless, far more people are living their lives according to the dictates and influences of Satan than at any time in the history of mankind.

For almost six thousand years, Satan has covertly infiltrated and manipulated nations, influenced societies, and inspired wars. He has had a major part in causing the misery, suffering and death of millions of people—soon to be billions.

Since he deceived Adam and Eve, by getting them to accept his word over God's, Satan has occupied the position of this world's ruler.

Two related, but distinct, aspects of Satan's activities are identifiable in the New Testament: Satan's hostility toward mankind, and his animosity toward God.

Satan's predatory aggression toward humanity is summed up in I Peter 5

I Peter 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

Peter's statement can be expounded by considering several of Satan's activities.

First, let us look at Satan's hostility toward mankind.

Satan is portrayed not only as the tempter, who tests people to see whether they will give in to evil, similar to the role of 'the Satan' in the Book of Job, but also as the one who drove humans to evil. At times, the dividing line between tempting or driving humans to evil may be blurry.

Jesus was led into the desert where He would not only endure, but also resist temptation by the devil. Similarly, he condemns Peter's rebuke to Himself as another

temptation of Satan.

Matthew 16:21-23 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You! "But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

In some instances evil actions are attributed to the action of Satan, who has inspired and, at times, even possessed, individuals. In this way, the betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot, is attributed to the entry of Satan into Judas.

Luke 22:3-4 Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them.

Elsewhere, Peter's denial of Jesus is attributed to the actions of Satan, who seeks to "sift" Peter.

Luke 22:31-34 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death. "Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

That was a day Peter never forgot, you can be sure.

In verse 31, "You" is plural in these two instances, indicating that all of the disciples are in view, not just Peter. In other words, "Satan is seeking to shake you all violently, as one does wheat, to cause you to fall." In Peter's case, the shaking was to be his panic-prompted, three times repeated denial that he even knew Christ.

This picture of being sifted is interesting. Grain was agitated or shaken in a kind of fan or sieve. The grain remained in the fan, and the chaff and dust were thrown off. That is

the image here of what Satan tries to do to us, sift us through a fan and try and blow us out of the way.

So Christ says that Satan desired to try Peter; to place trials and temptations before him, "to agitate him" to see whether anything of faith would remain, or whether all would not be found to be chaff—mere natural enthusiasm and false faith. This is a warning to all disciples of Christ, all the way down to just after His second coming.

What we are seeing here is the way that Satan is active in our lives, and everyone else's lives, in trying to deceive, and cause enmity against God.

In another example in Acts, Ananias' deceptive scheme is attributed to Satan, who filled his heart.

Acts 5:1-5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last.

It was not Ananias and Sapphira's main offense that they attempted to deceive people. It is true that Ananias had attempted to deceive the apostles, and it is true, also, that this was a crime. But still, the principal magnitude of the offense was that they had attempted to deceive God.

The great crowning sin of attempting to deceive God was brought into full view. Similarly, when David saw his sin as committed against God to be so enormous that he lost sight of it as an offense to man, and said, "Against You, You only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Both David and the apostles saw it for what it was, that the enormity of the crime was against God, and not just man.

So, Ananias' heart and mind were full of this thing because he was so intent on it; the indication in the original wording is that he was "strongly impelled" or "excited" by Satan to commit this crime.

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Satan's hostility toward humans is also seen in his role as the author of misfortune, disaster and illness. In Luke 13:16, a woman who had been suffering from physical afflictions for many years was bound by Satan. In II Corinthians 12:7, Paul describes his infamous "thorn in the flesh" as a "messenger from Satan." Satan can also be said to hinder the actions of individuals as in I Thessalonians 2:18, where Paul states that his desire to return to Thessalonica has been thwarted by Satan.

I think that it is very common for us as human beings to just forget, or not realize, the enormity of Satan's job, and the different ways and the wiles that he uses to come after us, and much of it is covert.

Some of the terms that are used for Satan's actions with regard to his influence over humans are, that he enters people, he sifts as wheat, fills the heart with sin, authors sin, binds, is a messenger of suffering, hinders, and thwarts. His full-time job is to do just that, whatever will work with us, especially those of us in God's church.

Satan being the author of sin is author of its consequence, death. God's law makes death the executioner of sin, and man Satan's "lawful captive."

Second, let us look at Satan's animosity toward God.

As the opponent of God, Satan also seeks to thwart the advance of God's purposes, and His commission to His church. The diametrical opposition between God and Satan is evidenced in Acts 26, where while recounting his vision of Jesus and his subsequent conversion, Paul cites Christ's words.

Acts 26:17-18 I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.'

Our job, our duty and our responsibility as members of God's church, and especially as ministers, is to turn people from the power of Satan. Well, to help do that, because it is actually God that does this with the power of His Holy Spirit. We see there that faith is a definite and essential quality there.

The association of Satan with darkness, and God with light is characteristic of the evil and good, and final judgment and salvation. The important point here is that these

illustrations reflect the underlying opposition between Satan and God. Satan is doing one thing on the negative side, and God is as extremely opposite as can be, on the positive and the good side.

The conflict between Satan and God is seen most vividly in the book of Revelation, where explicit references to the conflict between Satan and God are described as breaking out in heaven, and then fought on the earth.

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." For the devil has come down to you!

I do not know if that has happened yet, or will happen in the future, but we do know that Satan is very active here on earth, and things are increasing on his side in appearance of grabbing hold of people and causing them to sin and grow worse.

Here, we see Satan characterized as the enemy of God. The ancient serpent is a reference to the serpent of Genesis 3, as we well know.

References to Satan show a definite shift in emphasis from the Old Testament to the New Testament. In the Old Testament, Satan functions as an adversarial member of the divine council under the sovereignty of God.

However, in the New Testament, Satan has become the devil, the archenemy of God, who mounts a significant, but ultimately futile, challenge to God's authority. Especially in the New Testament, there is a blending of descriptions and designations for Satan as the archenemy of God. He has always been that since the creation of man and before, but it has just been revealed to man to that extent in the New Testament.

It is important to realize and understand that Satan is not God's competitor; he is God's evil enemy vainly trying to usurp the throne of heaven. As love, truth, and holiness characterize God, so malice or hatred (the spring of murder), lying, and uncleanness characterize Satan. Everything is opposite of God's way of life.

So with this, we get a glimpse of the absolute necessity that Satan is removed from his deeply negative influence on mankind and His constant meddling in God's plan of salvation. We are so thankful to have that revelation shown to us in the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 16 details God's instructions to the Levitical priesthood of ancient Israel concerning the Day of Atonement. Let us briefly examine the activities of this day to see their vital connection with the restraining of Satan after Christ's return.

The Aaronic High Priest was to make a special sin offering once a year to atone for all the sins of Israel. This was done on the Day of Atonement.

Leviticus 16:29-34 "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. And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year." And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

The High Priest was to take from the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats as a sin offering. One of the two goats was to be sent into the wilderness. The goat on which the lot fell to be the guilty goat was to be presented alive before the Lord, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the Azazel into the wilderness. The High Priest was to cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the Azazel.

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Leviticus 16:5-10 And he [Aaron, or the high priest] 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. [Then, the high priest offered a sin offering for himself and his whole household.] "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. 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. [literally, 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 [Azazel] shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat [Azazel] into the wilderness.

Many translations use the English word scapegoat instead of Azazel, but scapegoat carries an entirely wrong connotation. Originally it was escape goat—the goat allowed to escape in the wilderness—which the translators took to be the meaning of Azazel.

But, today, the English word scapegoat signifies, 'one who bears blame or guilt for others.' But Satan, represented by the Azazel, will bear his own guilt.

The Azazel goat is not our sin bearer. Jesus took our guilt—our sins—upon Himself as an innocent substitutionary sacrifice.

The real cause—the actual author of those sins—was Satan! It would not be justice for Christ to bear guilt that is not His, while Satan goes free. God's great plan will finally work full justice by placing the original blame and guilt where it belongs, right on the head of Satan.

The Azazel goat carries away the sins of all the people who are already forgiven. These sins were already fully paid by Christ's substitute sacrifice, symbolized by the killing of the innocent goat before those same sins were finally laid on the live goat. They had been previously paid for by the death of the slain goat in symbolism.

The High Priest next offered the goat, chosen by lot for the Lord, as a sin offering for all the people. As soon as the slain goat was dead, the High Priest went within the veil and presented the blood of this goat before the archetypal throne of God.

Leviticus 16:15-16 "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with

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the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

So the High Priest took the blood within the veil, to the mercy seat, which typified the risen Christ figuratively taking His blood, once for all, within the veil to the very throne of God in heaven, there to intercede for us as High Priest.

It was Christ Himself who was slain for the sins of all mankind, and who then assumed the office of our perfect, sinless High Priest in heaven.

Paul writes in Hebrews 6:19-20, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

Ephesians 2:13-16 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

The resurrected Christ began to do what the Aaronic High Priest did in type on the Day of Atonement. Throughout the year Israel's sins were symbolically transferred to the Tabernacle and its fixtures.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, this mountainous load of guilt was symbolically purged from the nation in order that God might continue to dwell in Israel, because sin separates people from God, who is Holy.

Isaiah points this out in Isaiah 59

Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

That is what happens when those sins are not taken care of by the blood of Christ. God does not hear the world, unless they genuinely repent.

Satan is the real author of all sin. We cannot ultimately be made at-one-with God, as long as this instigator of sin is with us. There would not be justice with God unless Satan's own guilt in our sins were placed right back on his head. It would not be justice for Christ to bear Satan's guilt, as well as our own guilt, for our sins.

Christ has carried our sins, so we do not have to continually carry them. They must be removed entirely from us, because God does not tolerate sin in His presence; and that is why sin separates us from God. This is why we are so thankful that we are forgiven of those sins during the course of the year as we genuinely repent and call on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. But the world does not have that benefit at this time, because they do not understand, and they have not been called.

The slain goat represented the crucified Jesus. The High Priest, by taking the blood of this slain goat into the veil to the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, a type of God's throne, represented and did the work of the risen Christ, who ascended to the right hand of God the Father, there interceding as our High Priest.

The priest seized the live goat and symbolically placed the sins of Israel on the head of Azazel. These sins originate with Satan, so he is the father of all sins, however, each human being must take responsibility for his own actions—"the desires of your father you want to do."

John 8:42-44 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Satan the devil is the father of the world and its activities.

Jesus took our guilt—our sins—upon Himself as an innocent substitution, a sacrifice to pay the penalty of sin, which is eternal death. But the real cause of those sins was Satan the devil. He is the author of the sins of mankind. So here are all of man's Satan-

inspired sins symbolically being put right back on Satan's head, where they belong.

The Azazel was to continue living. The goat has to bear on itself all the people's iniquities, and to go to an uninhabited land (outer darkness); and the High Priest released the live goat in the wilderness.

Satan, represented by this live goat, is a spirit being therefore he lives indefinitely, and we will have to wait and see the specifics of what God ultimately does with him.

To signify that Satan, at least, initially would not be destroyed, the goat was permitted to live. But notice that he was completely removed from the presence of mankind.

Satan is the accuser of the brethren and His power over human beings is founded on sin. When these sins, of which he is the author, are laid back on him, after being removed from us by Christ, then Satan will have lost his claim on us, and will not be able to accuse us any more. He is still our accuser, but Christ is covering our sins for us because we have been baptized, accepted Jesus Christ as our personal Savior, and we have had the Holy Spirit impregnated into us. So, we have the power to resist Satan.

So, just as the acceptance of the blood of the first goat, Christ, symbolized complete propitiation, and pardon of Israel's sins, so the sending of Azazel away bearing those expiated sins symbolizes the complete removal of all sins—deliverance by the atonement from the power of the adversary.

The sacrifice of the first innocent victim was the means of reconciliation with God, but not yet complete justice.

The driving away of the second live goat shows the final atonement, by placing the sins on the author of sins where they belong, and the complete removal of the sins and their author from the presence of God and His people—and in this way the complete deliverance of the people from the power of Satan is fulfilled.

Webster says, "To atone," means, "to set at one; to join in one; to form by uniting." We will not be completely joined in one, and united with God, until this is done.

Remember, after laying both his hands on the live goat—Azazel—Aaron had to wash and cleanse himself before coming in contact with the people. The symbolism is that of having come in contact with Satan. Azazel was driven away from the Holy of Holies, a symbol of God's presence.

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This act of putting these already expiated and forgiven sins on the head of this live goat does not take place until after the High Priest returns from the Holy of Holies within the veil—so this typified an act to take place after the second coming of Christ to this earth.

The first goat represented the innocent Jesus who died for our sins. The High Priest represented the risen Christ going within the veil to the mercy seat, or throne of God in heaven, for over 1,900 years.

The High Priest returned to place the sins finally upon the head of the live goat representing the return of Christ. The High Priest places the sins He carried on their author, Satan; and the High Priest sends him away alive into a desolate uninhabited wilderness—the "bottomless pit" or abyss of Revelation 20:3.

In Revelation 19, we have the prophecy of the Second Coming of Christ. Then, at the beginning of Revelation 20, we find exactly the same happening that Leviticus 16 shows. Satan is sent away—the symbol used here is the bottomless pit, a symbol of an uninhabited desolate wilderness. According to Leviticus 16:21, he is sent there "by the hand of a fit man" as the King James Version translates it, or, "by the hand of a suitable man" as the New King James Version translates it, or, "by the hand of a man who is in readiness" as the English Standard Version translates it. Tradition says that the man was appointed for this work the year before.

Now Satan is not killed. He does not die. He is still alive a thousand years later—after the millennium, as Revelation 20 tells us.

What will it be like for people when Satan is bound in outer darkness for a thousand years?

Jesus Christ has already overcome the Devil and qualified to replace him as ruler over the earth. Christ is returning soon to rule this earth with a rod of iron. Satan will be deposed from his earthly throne as the god of this world, and Christ will set up God's kingdom.

The Day of Atonement reveals the answer to what will happen to Satan at Christ's return to reign supreme, and bring peace for a thousand years. This day reveals Satan's fate in God's Master Plan.

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

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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 for a little while.

He is not only thrown into a bottomless pit, he is chained, thrown into a bottomless pit and sealed. So there are three things that happen to him there emphasizing how utterly incapable Satan will be of ever influencing anyone for a thousand years.

The Day of Atonement has also a deep personal meaning for everyone whose eyes God has opened. When Satan and his demons are dethroned from office they must be replaced by qualified rulers, which is what we are being trained for right now in the church.

Satan will be replaced by Jesus Christ; and Satan's demons by those of us who have surrendered to God, and been willing to obey Him. A major part of the Day of Atonement is faith and obedience.

We do not have the ability or capacity to even begin to commence to measure up to the standard necessary to bring peace and happiness to humanity. Only the power, mind and nature of God can do that.

That positive change is possible only through spiritual conversion. Through conversion every single individual can have God's own power and nature added to him by receiving the Holy Spirit.

Satan will be bound with a symbolic chain and locked up with a key to prevent him from escaping to deceive mankind.

Revelation 20:7-8 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.

Remember, the 'bottomless pit' or abyss was pictured by the desert wilderness where Azazel was banished. Satan and his demons will be completely restrained by Christ from further leading mankind into sin. No longer will Satan be able to broadcast his evil attitudes into people's minds. Just contemplate for a moment, not having that influence

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at all coming into our minds. The pressure that we feel in trying to do things right, and trying to obey God, and having Satan constantly plugging little thoughts or trying to distract us, that will not be there. The people of the world will have, in a sense, an easier time overcoming sin.

Revelation 18:2, shows where the rest of the demons will be, all removed from the presence of mankind.

Revelation 18:2 And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!

After God allows the terrible woes of Revelation 9 to be unleashed on humans they will not repent and turn to God, because they will still remain deceived.

Revelation 9:20-21 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

Even after the terrible seven last plagues—the wrath of God poured out without mixture—the greater part of humanity still remains stubbornly rebellious.

Revelation 16:11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Revelation 16:21 And great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

Why will people not repent? It is because they are so deceived.

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.

There are three unclean spirits of demons mentioned in Revelation 16:

Revelation 16:13-14 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

So their purpose is to deceive the whole world about Christ's second coming. The dragon, of course, is Satan and he is the continual and relentless motivation behind this massive scheme of deception.

The apostle Paul predicted the end of world rule by fallen angels in Hebrews 2

Hebrews 2:5 "For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels."

God speaks in His inspired written Word of three worlds: (1) "The world that then was" that perished in the flood (II Peter 3:6); (2) "This present evil world" (Galatians 1:4); and (3) "The world to come"—the World Tomorrow (Hebrews 2:5).

In the World Tomorrow, the devil and demons will no longer be in authority over the earth's nations and religion. Paul also shows who will replace the demons as rulers over the world.

Romans 16:20 The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen."

And then to the Corinthian members Paul writes in I Corinthians 6:

I Corinthians 6:2-3 "Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?"

After Satan and his demons are put away, their deception and false way of life will still

maintain its hold for a little while on depraved human hearts. Here is a prophecy that is fulfilled early in the millennium.

Ezekiel 38:1-13 Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, I am against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and lead you out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, all splendidly clothed, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya are with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all its troops; the house of Togarmah from the far north and all its troops—many people are with you. "Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. After many days you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword and gathered from many people on the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them dwell safely. You will ascend, coming like a storm, covering the land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you." Thus says the Lord God: "On that day it shall come to pass that thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: You will say, 'I will go up against a land of unwalled villages; I will go to a peaceful people, who dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'—to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places that are again inhabited, and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. Sheba, Dedan, the merchants of Tarshish, and all their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?'"

This is after the beginning of Christ's kingdom on earth. These still-deceived people are a major portion of the human race.

Meshech and Tubal are probably the dominant people of Russia, while Gog and Magog probably include the Mongols and China; Gomer and Togarmah are probably other Asiatic peoples.

God will deal severely with them to show them that He is God.

Ezekiel 39:3-7 Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. You shall fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who are with you; I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and to the beasts of the field to be devoured. You shall fall on the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord God. "And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in security in the coastlands. Then they shall know that I am the Lord. So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not let them profane My holy name anymore. Then the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

When Magog falls, the birds will feast. God will "drive" Magog to its battle against Israel, but will then bring sudden defeat upon it, bringing glory to His name. Ezekiel 39:9-16 predicts the slaughter will be so great that it will take seven years to burn all the weapons with their fuel, and seven months to bury the dead. Scavenging animals will have a feast.

How will Atonement affect this world?

Satan will be imprisoned in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, but before that, he tries to destroy mankind. Long term, he has always tried to destroy us, and he especially steps up his efforts as his imprisonment draws near.

Daniel 9:27 Then He [Christ] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week; but in the middle of the week He [Christ] shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering. And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate [Satan], even until the consummation, which is determined, is poured out on the desolate.

The word translated "desolate" in various versions of the Bible, should be translated "Desolator."

The primary "Desolator" of the earth is Satan, who also is called Abaddon and Apollyon, meaning "Destroyer."

Revelation 9:11 "And they had as king over them the angel [Satan] of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon."

Daniel was told it would take three and a half years for the returned Christ to complete the task of bringing the world into at-one-ment.

All through this very familiar prophecy, which predicted the exact year of the first coming of Jesus the Messiah's preaching to the Jews in 27 A.D., the year for a day principle is used. A week becomes seven years in fulfillment. Christ was to confirm the covenant for one week—a full seven years.

But the prophecy also states He was to be cut off in the "midst of the week," leaving another three and a half years to be fulfilled after His second coming.

He spent three and a half years from autumn of 27 A.D. to the Passover in 31 A.D. confirming the covenant by personally teaching and training a first group of true Christians who will be given the over-lordship of the world that the covenant promised.

At His return, Christ will continue what He began by actually putting His saints in power over the nations, bringing the nations into subjection to God's government—the Kingdom of God.

The apostle Peter proclaimed that the time of refreshing and restoration—the time the government of God is to be restored—would come when Jesus Christ returns to earth.

Acts 3:19-21 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

The government of God is to be restored to earth. A whole new way of life needs to be restored to mankind. It was once offered to Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, but they quickly rejected it, because they were taken in by the serpent's subtle deception.

The world needs submission to God's revealed will, faith instead of skepticism, reliance on the superior wisdom and experience of our Creator, instead of human wisdom. The world needs obedience instead of human reasoning with out-of-control feelings, desires, and emotions, based on the desire of fleshly lusts.

Atonement and this World's Future by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

The first step for restoration of a perfect world is reinstatement of God's authority. There will be a worldwide system of mayors, judges, lesser and greater kings and other leaders. Jesus referred to these offices in the parables. One will be given rule over ten cities, another rule over five, and so forth.

Luke 19:16-20 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' And he said to him, 'Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

Revelation 5:8-10 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

God's government is to be restored, and at the same time Satan's part in sin is to be transferred to his own head.

At-one-ment will not be complete with merely putting Satan away. The greatest work will still remain. People will still be hating and killing each other. Man's mind and nature has to be re-taught, his character reshaped and remolded until it becomes "at one" with God. Then the fully confirmed New Covenant will be completed.

In that time, according to chapters 31 and 50 of the Book of Jeremiah, the attitude of Israel and Judah will be one of repentant weeping, and everyone will know of God, wanting to join with Him. God greatly blames their false shepherds, their false ministers, for their past sins and wrong attitudes. This is Satan's doing through his counterfeit ministers. But in that time Israel and Judah will have no more sin.

Jeremiah 50:20 In those days and in that time," says the LOORD, "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found; for I will pardon those whom I preserve.

God will pardon those who He brings back alive through the Great Tribulation. Then,

there will be at-one-ment between God and Israel.

Zechariah 3:9 'For behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua: Upon the stone are seven eyes. Behold, I will engrave its inscription,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.'

Israel will have been brought to her knees in humility, and brought to repentance by the terrible national punishments to be inflicted on her. This is the attitude pictured by fasting on the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement is a vivid illustration of the state of mind necessary for salvation. It pictures an attitude of humility, of faith, of godly sorrow, and obedience—of earnestly seeking to live God's way of life—the right way of life. It is also a warning of the state to which God will be forced to reduce Israel by war, captivity, deportation, slavery and persecution.

As the result of this humble and submissive attitude, the twelve nations or tribes of Israel will have no more disagreements or jealousies of one another. They will cooperate to convert Gentile nations to the government of God.

Isaiah 11:12-14 He will set up a banner for the nations, and will assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Also the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not harass Ephraim. They will then cooperate to convert Gentile nations to the government of God. But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west; together they shall plunder the people of the East; they shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab; and the people of Ammon shall obey them.

Seeing Israel's right example, Gentile nations will willingly, of their own volition, look to God's nation for the way of peace and at-one-ment. When the Gentiles learn the truth and realize (at last) how Satan, the father of lies, has deceived them, they will forsake the ways of their ancestors.

Jeremiah 16:19 O Lord, my strength and my fortress, my refuge in the day of affliction, the Gentiles shall come to You from the ends of the earth and say, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, worthlessness and unprofitable

things."

Even the days shall come when the Gentiles themselves, ashamed of their misdirected confidence, will renounce their idols, and acknowledge that their fathers had believed and taught lies, and worshipped silly things. They will have come to a truly humble state of mind, ready to submit.

Today in the church, fasting helps put us in a humble state of mind. We go through the internal cleansing of a fast, both physically and spiritually.

Passover has a cleansing on the outside, by the washing of feet. The Day of Atonement is a cleansing on the inside, by fasting in humility.

The purpose of fasting is to help us to see ourselves as we really are! And to see God as He is!

Fasting is not penance; it is not a hunger strike to force our own will on God. We are to fast in order to humble our own fleshly mind with its human reasoning and fleshly will. It helps us draw closer to God by acknowledging our own nothingness and asking for God's strength.

Jesus Christ received the strength to resist Satan's strongest temptation by fasting for forty days and nights. Spiritually, He was at His strongest at the end of forty days, because He was completely humble before God.

It only takes the little hunger we have on the Day of Atonement to convince us that we, as Job, are just like maggots and worms. We, like worms, are puny, insignificant little creatures down here inwardly warring with one another. In this condition we are able to truly realize how totally dependent on physical food and water that we are.

Fasting on this day reveals to us how much we still love ourselves and how difficult it is to give up some self. This day is a serious and solemn test to see which we will put first—the call of the body for food and water, or the sincere desire to follow the call of God in obedience.

The Day of Atonement is a vivid illustration of the state of mind necessary for salvation. It pictures an attitude of humility, of faith, of godly sorrow, and of earnestly seeking God's way of life—the right way.

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This Day of Atonement today is also a very timely warning of the state to which God is forced to reduce the people of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other descendents of the ancient Israelites by war, pestilence, disease, imprisonment, slavery and persecution, because of following Satan's lead. What happens to Israel will happen in a worse way to the Gentiles.

The commandment to observe the fast of the Day of Atonement is a test commandment, to see if we will obey or rebel—to see if we are willing to humble ourselves, resist Satan, and submit to God.

These things of the Day of Atonement, are more than symbolic of how we will be able to replace Satan as world ruler, they are essential. They are vital to our fulfilling the positions God has prepared for us as kings and priests. We must, with God's help, break every yoke and overcome every sin.

Isaiah 58:6 "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?"

At Satan's chaining by an angel of God, the minds of human beings formerly kept spiritually closed by Satan, will be spiritually opened by the Spirit of God.

For the first time, humanity will be able to understand God's master plan of salvation. People will then want to repent and receive forgiveness of their sins, through Christ's sacrifice. Only then will human beings become completely set at one with our God and Father and Jesus Christ—completely unified—as pictured by the Day of Atonement.