



# DAY OF ATONEMENT

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*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 for a little while. —Revelation 20:1-3*

## OBJECTIVE

To teach that the Day of Atonement depicts the binding and removal of Satan the devil and his influence on the earth.

### *Note to parents*

We encourage you to read through this material with your children to provide an overview of the meaning of the Day of Atonement and what it pictures. Then choose appropriate materials from the supplemental pages that you feel will be helpful in teaching and reinforcing the meaning of the day.

## THE MEANING OF THE FESTIVAL

The fifth annual holy day, the Day of Atonement, reveals Satan's fate in God's master plan. This holy day symbolizes the removal of the instigator of all sin—Satan the devil. The removal of Satan is something to celebrate! It is a day to celebrate because all of humanity will finally be able to be at one with God the Father through Christ's sacrifice.

*Masquerading as an angel of light, Satan has been able to masterfully deceive the whole world.*

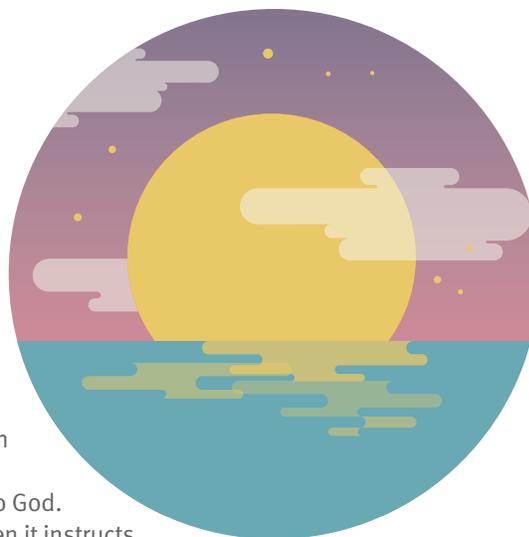
Satan, who is called the god of this present world, constantly tries to influence people to disobey God and His law (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2). Masquerading as an angel of light, Satan has been able to masterfully deceive the whole world (2 Corinthians 11:14; Revelation 12:9). God and humans can never be fully at one until Satan is completely banished and the whole world has repented.





Jesus has already overcome Satan and qualified to replace him as ruler of the earth (John 16:33). Jesus Christ will return soon as King of Kings and Lord of Lords to oust Satan and rule the earth. Satan will be restrained and forbidden from deceiving the nations throughout the Millennium (Revelation 20:1-3).

*God gives us a special command... to fast for 24 hours on the tenth day of the seventh month, from sunset to sunset.*



As we observe the Day of Atonement, God gives us a special command not just to rest and observe a Sabbath, but also to fast for 24 hours on the tenth day of the seventh month, from sunset to sunset (Leviticus 23:27, 32). To *fast* means to go without food or drink as a way to draw close to God. The Bible sometimes uses the phrase *afflict your souls* when it instructs us to fast (Numbers 29:7).

Fasting on this holy day can teach us many important lessons. Fasting humbles us because going without food and drink makes us weak. Fasting reminds us that we are made of flesh and blood and would die without food and water to keep us alive; we are not powerful spirit like God. Fasting reminds us how much we need God and how we are totally dependent upon Him for life (Acts 17:28).

*Through fasting, God can give us the spiritual strength necessary to resist Satan and his influence.*

Fasting should also teach us humility. By humbling ourselves “under the mighty hand of God,” we lessen our focus on self and grow in God’s favor (1 Peter 5:6). Fasting demonstrates our earnest desire to seek Him and turn from our sinful ways. Through fasting, God can give us the spiritual strength necessary to resist Satan and his influence.

No wonder God asks us to fast on the Day of Atonement! It helps us realize that the only way we can overcome the evil influence of Satan is to draw close to God (James 4:7-8). So while fasting can be hard, the spiritual benefits make it very worthwhile.

In Leviticus 16, God provided instruction to the Levitical priesthood about a special ceremony for the Day of Atonement. Two goats were chosen from the herd, and the high priest brought them both before God. Through the casting of lots, the Lord showed that one goat would be “for the LORD” and the other would be *azazel*, the Hebrew word translated “scapegoat” (Leviticus 16:8).

The goat “for the LORD” represented Jesus Christ and was put to death, symbolizing His merciful and generous payment for our sins. The *azazel* represented Satan and was rejected. Satan’s guilt in influencing others to disobey God and sin was placed back upon his head. This goat was then taken to



the wilderness and removed from being around people ever again. This event looked forward to the time when God will place the original blame and guilt of sin where it belongs—on Satan’s head—and then banish him.

*The Day of Atonement truly is a time of rejoicing for the picture it provides of things to come: the time ahead that will be free of Satan’s evil influence.*

Upon Satan’s removal, the whole earth will enjoy a restoration of God’s way. No longer will the evil influence of Satan entice people to disobey God. Christ will rule the earth, Satan will be removed, and humanity’s nature will be refashioned, reshaped, remolded until it becomes at one with God ([Acts 3:19-21](#)). The Day of Atonement truly is a time of rejoicing for the picture it provides of things to come: the time ahead that will be free of Satan’s evil influence.

## SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION POINTS

You can use the following guided discussion topics to stimulate dialogue about the Day of Atonement. As you discuss these concepts, be mindful of the maturity level of your children and adjust the discussion based on their level of personal development.

### *Day of Atonement observance commanded*

#### Tenth day of the seventh month ([Leviticus 23:26-32](#); [Numbers 29:7](#))

Review the four previous festivals and their meanings:

**Passover**, a memorial of Christ’s sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins

**Feast of Unleavened Bread**, a seven-day festival that reminds us of our need to turn from sin and obey God’s laws

**Feast of Pentecost**, a festival that reminds us of the granting of the Holy Spirit, necessary for the overcoming of sin

**Feast of Trumpets**, a festival that depicts Jesus Christ’s return to establish the Kingdom of God and the moment of the first resurrection

Explain the difference between the calendar we use today and God’s sacred calendar.

Explain and define *convocation*: “a calling together; a group of people formally assembled for a special purpose.” Since this is a holy convocation under God’s authority, our presence is commanded.

Explain and define *afflict your souls*. It means “to be afflicted, bowed down, humbled, chastened” and is used in the Bible to describe fasting ([Psalm 35:13](#); [Isaiah 58:3](#)).



Explain that we are to fast from sunset to sunset.

How is this holy day different from the other six?

Whose feasts are these? (See [Leviticus 23:1-2](#).)

How long is forever?

### *Make an atonement (Leviticus 16:29-31)*

Explain and define *atone*: “to set at one, to join as one, to form by uniting, to cover.”

Explain that this day symbolizes God and humanity becoming “at one.” Passover focuses on God’s reconciliation with an individual, while Atonement focuses on God’s reconciliation with humanity as a whole.

Explain that atonement must be made for the cleansing of our sins and iniquities. Read [Psalm 51:1-12](#).

*God appreciates our efforts to please Him through fasting on the Day of Atonement.*

### *Fasting: What is its purpose?*

**Neither eat nor drink (Esther 4:16)**

Explain and define *fasting*: going without food and water.

Discuss how God is pleased when we fast.

Explain that God appreciates our efforts to please Him through fasting on the Day of Atonement.



### **Celebrate your Sabbath (Leviticus 23:32)**

What type of attitude do we have when we celebrate?

Discuss the proper attitude for a fast—not complaining, not “watching the clock.”

Take the time to pray with your child on the Day of Atonement.

### **Ezra proclaims a fast (Ezra 8:21-23)**

Emphasize that the Israelites’ purpose in fasting was to humble themselves and seek God’s direction and protection.

Explain that God honored their fast because they had a proper attitude.



## *Explain that God honored their fast because they had a proper attitude.*

Explain and discuss humility.

Fast as a family during times of uncertainty.

### **Unacceptable fasting (Isaiah 58:3-7)**

Contrast humility and pride (see [Daniel 9:3-6](#) and [Matthew 6:16-18](#)).

Explain and define *reconciliation*.

Explain the need to seek God's blessing on our individual fasts.

## *Fasting demonstrates our urgent need for God's love, grace and mercy.*

### **Jesus Christ fasted 40 days and nights (Matthew 4:1-2)**

Explain that the purpose of fasting is to humble oneself.

Explain that when we are weakened from fasting, we become acutely aware of our total dependence on God for life, breath, food and water. We are reminded that our temporary, physical bodies are subject to death. God is the giver and sustainer of life.

Explain and discuss that fasting demonstrates our urgent need for God's love, grace and mercy. As physical beings, we have no ability within ourselves to live forever. Only God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ can grant the gift of eternal life.

Explain that fasting is not a "hunger strike" to force our will on God.

Explain that fasting allows one to draw closer to God and know His will.

Share times when fasting allowed you to know and understand God's will more fully.

Explain the importance of seeking God's strength to resist Satan just as Christ did.

Read about others in the Scriptures who fasted in a right way before God.

## *We become "at one with God" by worshipping Him in spirit and truth.*

### **Submit to God and resist Satan (James 4:6-10)**

Emphasize that we cannot resist Satan by ourselves; we must submit and draw near to God. We become "at one with God" by worshipping Him in spirit and truth ([John 4:23](#); [17:1-26](#)).



Explain that fasting is an essential way to draw closer to God. Through fasting we gain awareness that our sins have separated us from God ([Isaiah 59:2](#)).

Share your experiences of fasting to draw closer to God.

*Humanity will never be free of his influence and the consequences of sin until Satan is completely removed.*



*Who is Satan? Why does Satan need to be restrained?*

**Satan wanted to be like the Most High ([Isaiah 14:12-15](#))**

Explain that Lucifer is a created spirit being, an angel.

Explain Lucifer's destruction of the physical earth.

Explain that Lucifer is Satan the devil.

**Satan introduced sin and rebellion into the world ([John 8:44](#))**

Contrast Satan, the author of sin, with Christ, the author of salvation ([Hebrews 5:9](#)).

Emphasize that Satan the devil is the primary source of humanity's sins. Humanity will never be free of his influence and the consequences of sin until Satan is completely removed ([Revelation 20:10](#)).

**Satan makes himself seem like an angel of light ([2 Corinthians 11:14](#))**

**Satan is the god of this world ([2 Corinthians 4:3-4](#))**

**Satan is the ruler of this present, evil world ([John 12:31; 14:30](#))**

**Satan is the prince of the power of the air ([Ephesians 2:1-2](#))**

**Satan has deceived the whole world and is the accuser of the brethren ([Revelation 12:9-10](#))**

*Help your child understand that Satan is constantly influencing humanity with wrong attitudes and ideas.*

**Satan is our adversary and is like a roaring lion ([1 Peter 5:8-9](#))**

Explain how Satan has continually deceived humanity from the very beginning, starting with Adam and Eve.



Help your child understand that Satan is constantly influencing humanity with wrong attitudes and ideas.

Give examples of wrong thoughts and ideas like “Nobody cares about me,” “Nobody likes me,” “I never get what I want,” or “It’s not fair!”

Explain that humanity cannot be fully reconciled to God the Father until Satan’s influence is completely removed.

*Regardless of age, we are all in a spiritual battle and God expects us to fight against Satan.*



#### **Armor of God (Ephesians 6:11-18)**

Work with your child to memorize the different pieces of armor. Discuss the unique protection each part of the body needs.

Discuss how one uses each piece of armor in defense against Satan and his tactics.

Emphasize that regardless of age, we are all in a spiritual battle and God expects us to fight against Satan.

*Satan will try one last time to overthrow God the Father but will fail.*

#### ***What will happen to Satan?***

##### **Satan will be restrained (Revelation 20:1-3)**

Remind your child that Satan is a created spirit being and therefore:

Satan cannot die; he is immortal.

But God is far more powerful than Satan and capable of having him restrained, keeping him from having access to humanity and God’s family.

Explain that a millennium is 1,000 years.

Explain why we call this 1,000-year period the Millennium.

Explain that the rest of the fallen angels (demons) will also be banished.



### Satan will be loosed to deceive the nations (Revelation 20:7-10)

Explain that Satan will be released for a short period of time at the end of the Millennium.

Explain that Satan will try one last time to overthrow God the Father but will fail.

Explain that human beings alive at the time of Satan's release will have had no exposure to his influence. It will be a time for those human beings to be tested.

Emphasize that Satan will be removed forever after this short season (verse 10).

*Lots were cast to determine which goat would be for the Lord and which would be azazel.*

### *Symbolism of ancient Israel's observance*

#### The high priest presented two goats to God (Leviticus 16:1-28)



**Verse 2:** The high priest only entered into the Holy Place once a year.

Explain that the high priest was the *only* individual allowed to enter into the Holy Place and *only* on the Day of Atonement.

Explain that God's presence was in the Holy Place.

**Verse 7:** Two goats were presented before God.

**Verse 8:** Lots were cast to determine which goat would be for the Lord and which would be *azazel* (the Hebrew word translated "scapegoat").

Explain that casting of lots is a solemn petition to God asking Him to decide a matter that cannot be determined by people.

Explain that "scapegoat" is not a particularly good translation. The Hebrew word for "scapegoat" (*azazel*) is thought to be a proper name in many ancient texts. This is indicated by the contrast that one goat was *for the Lord* and the other for *azazel*.

Explain that *azazel* means "removal or separation," signifying what Satan did when he turned against God.

Explain that the one "for the LORD" represents Christ and the one "for azazel" represents Satan.

**Verse 9:** The Lord's lot was a sin offering.

Explain that this signifies Christ's death for our sins.



**Verse 10:** The *azazel* remained alive.

Explain the symbolism that Satan is a spirit being and cannot die.

**Verse 11:** The high priest presented a sin offering for himself and his household.

**Verses 12-13:** He was to make a cloud of sweet incense.

Explain that incense represents prayers ([Revelation 5:8](#)).

Emphasize that the priest entered the Holy Place (representing the throne of God) in a cloud of sweet incense—symbolic of pleasing, acceptable prayers offered to God ([Psalm 141:2](#)).

Explain how our prayers should be “beaten fine” and possess sweetness instead of bitterness.

**Verse 14:** He was to sprinkle the blood of the bullock on the mercy seat.

Explain that the high priest had to be purified to officiate.

**Verses 15-19:** The goat that was to be the sin offering was killed.

Explain that the goat’s blood symbolized the blood of Christ ([Hebrews 9:11-15](#)).

Explain that Christ’s death covers our part—our guilt—in every sin of which we repent.

Emphasize that only God can forgive sin.

Explain that through Christ’s sacrifice, we are able to come before God’s throne in prayer; Christ is our High Priest ([Hebrews 4:14-16](#)).

**Verses 20-22:** Sins were confessed upon the live goat.

Explain that the laying on of hands symbolizes setting someone or something apart.

*The second goat being sent away signifies complete atonement—the full removal of the sins and their author from the presence of God and His people.*

Explain that Satan must bear responsibility for his part in humanity’s sins.

Compare the symbolism of the goat being sent away by the hand of a “suitable man” into the wilderness to the future reality of an angel casting Satan into the abyss (in [Revelation 20:1-3](#)).

Explain that the second goat being sent away signifies complete atonement—the full removal of the sins and their author from the presence of God and His people. God is a God of justice.

**Verses 23-28:** Final instructions about this ceremony.

Explain that the high priest and the “suitable man” both had to wash themselves before entering back into Israel. This represented their need for cleansing after being in contact with *azazel*, representing Satan.



## *Stories related to fasting*

**Resources to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah 1:4-2:8:** Nehemiah mourned, fasted and confessed the sins of Israel. King Artaxerxes granted safe passage and supplies to Nehemiah for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem “according to the good hand of my God upon me” (verse 8). Fasting and drawing close to God led to the restoration of the walls.

*The Jewish people fasted three days and three nights. By trusting God, Esther and her people were preserved.*



**Saving of the Jews in the Persian Empire in Esther 4:12-17:** Haman persuaded King Ahasuerus to issue a decree to destroy the Jews. Mordecai sought Queen Esther’s help, reminding her, “If you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (verse 14). The Jewish people fasted three days and three nights. By trusting God, Esther and her people were preserved.

**Fasting saved Nineveh from destruction in Jonah 3:1-10:** After Jonah warned Nineveh that God would destroy their city in 40 days because of their sins, the king proclaimed a fast for both man and beast: “So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them.... Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it” (verses 5, 10). Fasting was key in saving Nineveh from certain destruction.

## *Memory Verse*

*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. —Psalm 139:23-24*