

Who Or What Is Pictured By The Azazel Goat?

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Brethren, in just a week from today all of us in the church of God will be keeping the Day of Atonement. As I am sure we are all aware, the Day of Atonement is a unique holy day from all of the other festivals throughout the year and it's the one festival throughout the year that we fast. We go a twenty-four hour period without any food or water for that entire holy day, because that's what the Bible commands us to do. That's the unique thing about how we keep the Day of Atonement here in the new covenant church.

However, in Ancient Israel in the Old Testament there was another very unique thing about this particular holy day. It was the one day out of the year when the high priest was allowed to access the most holy place in the temple. It was the only day of the year that that was allowed and there was a strict protocol that he had to follow in accessing the most holy place. This played out as part of a ceremony that was commanded to be done on the Day of Atonement every year. This ceremony involved two goats. As we will see today, these goats are labeled. One of them is called the Lord's goat. The other is called the Azazel goat. If you look around not only in the church of God, but in popular religion in general, there is really not much debate in regards to what's being referred to by the Lord's goat. Most everyone acknowledges and agrees that that's the picture of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice and what He has done for mankind. That's pretty widely agreed upon. However, when it comes to the Azazel goat, there is a lot more debate in regard to that subject as to what the Azazel goat pictures and what the lessons are that are being taught to us through the picture of this goat.

What we are going to do today in this sermon is to take a look at this ceremony in Leviticus and see a lot of the lessons it teaches us, but we're going to particularly look at this subject of the Azazel goat, of who or what is pictured by this Azazel goat. That is the title for this sermon,

Who Or What Is Pictured By The Azazel Goat?

As I mentioned, this is a unique ceremony that was done only on the Day of Atonement. It was commanded of Israel to do this. This ceremony involved two different goats. One is identified as the Lord's goat. The other is identified as the Azazel goat. With the Lord's goat there is generally lots of agreement, but in regards to the Azazel goat, there's a lot of debate as to what this pictures and what the meaning of this ceremony is with the Azazel goat.

Before we go any further I would like to give you a brief synopsis of the two main arguments on this subject. I want you to have this in mind as we look at this particular subject today.

The most common teaching amongst the church of God on this subject is that the Azazel goat is a picture of Satan. In other words what this ceremony is telling us is it is looking forward to the time that Satan is bound for a thousand years during the millennial period and the world gets a break from him, because he is bound away from everyone and has no access to mankind. Again, that's the most popular view that you will see is taught in the church of God.

In popular religion in general, including your Protestant world and just those who would profess to be Christians, the most common view is quite different. In fact there are even some church of God organizations that espouse this view as well. The way this view goes is that the two goats that play out in this ceremony both picture Jesus Christ. The difference is that they are just picturing different functions or different purposes of what Christ's sacrifice accomplishes for us. Again, it's all just unified in picturing Jesus Christ.

Keep those two thoughts in mind as we go through this, because we are going to analyze the whole picture and learn the main messages of what this ceremony is teaching us. We are particular going to look at this subject of who or what is the Azazel goat. Let's start off by turning to Leviticus 16:1-2. This is where we see all of the instructions to this particular ceremony.

***Leviticus 16:1.** Now the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered profane fire before the Lord, and died; 2) and the Lord said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at just any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat. (NKJV)*

As I mentioned, this was the only time of year, and we'll see this expressly stated later, on the Day of Atonement, that this could be accessed. To understand the overall big picture here we need to understand the most holy place was picturing the throne of God the Father in heaven. The whole issue of the veil and the limited access to be able to go into the most holy place is all about access to God the Father. In fact you will see the whole symbolism is what this is picturing, because you have the Ark of the Covenant with the mercy seat and the cherubim on both sides of it. Basically, this is picturing the throne of God the Father, because He dwells between the cherubim. Also, you will see later in the fulfillment of this, when Christ goes before this throne as the High Priest, He is going before the Father. That's who is on this throne that He is going before to be accepted. You see what the symbolism of this is. For that matter, even when you look at the temple of God in general, the whole point of this symbolism was about God the Father. If you look at how Jesus Christ referred to the temple when He was a human on earth, He called it, "My Father's house." It was the house where His Father lived. You can see that's the whole point. I point that out because that's the big picture of what the veil and the access in here is about. It's about being able to access God the Father in a relationship with Him. That's the big picture. Then let's focus on the details. Continue in verses 3-8

3) *"Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering.*

4) *He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.*

5) *And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.*

6) *"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house. (NKJV)*

Notice here when the high priest would perform this ceremony, it included an animal sacrifice offering to atone for himself. The reason I'm pointing that out is we'll see later here that Jesus Christ goes in the role of the High Priest here when this is ultimately fulfilled, but He doesn't need an animal sacrifice to atone for Himself, because He lived the sinless life. He didn't have any sins to atone for. He is going in with blood to atone for all of us, but when the high priest would play this out symbolically, he had to have an offering to atone for himself basically to teach us that this was a sinful human being that had his own sins to cover, whereas Jesus Christ did not and we'll see when He fulfills it.

7) *He shall take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.*

8) *Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. (NKJV)*

I am quoting this out of the New King James Version of the Bible. We're going to come back to this issue later, but the translation here of scapegoat is a poor translation and it kind of skews the meaning of what this is saying. The Hebrew word translated here as "scapegoat" is "Azazel." We are going to come back and revisit this whole issue of Azazel and debate about it later in this sermon. I am just pointing that out as I read through this. Notice in this particular verse you have two goats, one is specifically referred to as the Lord's goat and one is referred to as something else. Notice they are contrasted with each other. Again, there's lots of debate about what Azazel means and we're going to come back to that, but just take note of the fact that only one of these goats is specifically referred to as the Lord's goat. That's an important piece of information. Pick up in verses 9-10.

9) *And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.*

10) *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 into the wilderness. (NKJV)*

Notice the second goat is not killed. It is not sacrificed. That's another important thing to notice here. Some of this you will understand later when we get into the details of the argument. That second goat is alive. It is never killed or sacrificed, so it can't be called

a sacrifice. When you sacrifice an animal, you kill it. This animal isn't killed. It's alive through this ceremony. Continue in verse 11.

11) "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself. (NKJV)

Again, this is a fallible human being doing this. He needs an atonement for himself where Christ would not. Continue in verses 12-22

12) Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the Lord, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil.

13) And he shall put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die.

14) He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

15) "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 the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. (NKJV)

This goat is for the people. This is the one identified as the Lord's goat.

16) 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.

17) There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.

18) And he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around.

19) Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20) "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.

21) 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.

22) The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness. (NKJV)

Basically this goat is taken out alive and released into an uninhabited area, in other words an area where there's nobody else and he has no effect on anyone else. That's basically what's playing out here.

As I mentioned here, the symbolism of this whole issue in terms of the bigger picture is access to God the Father in a relationship with Him. When you have the veil on the most holy place, people were not allowed to come in here. The high priest was only allowed to come in one day a year only as a part of this ceremony and that was it. Access was not allowed directly to this. This is all a picture of the throne of God the Father. That's what is being symbolized here. When we look at this overall picture, there's not a lot of debate about what is pictured by the high priest here or by the Lord's goat. As we go through this I'm first of all going to cover what this means. A lot of the issues here are not really debated at all, because the Bible is rather clear about them. Then we're also going to come back as we go through this and look specifically at this question of who is the Azazel goat. With this in mind, turn over to Hebrews 9:1-10. We are going to see that for most of this ceremony we really don't have to do any speculation or guessing at all, because the Bible just lays out very clearly exactly what's being pictured here.

Hebrews 9:1. *Then indeed, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary.*

2) For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary;

3) and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All,

4) which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant;

5) and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

6) Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services.

7) But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year ... (NKJV)

In other words, only on the Day of Atonement could he go in there.

7b) ... not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;

8) the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. (NKJV)

Notice here he's talking about the access being allowed in there. As we're going to see as we go through this subject, basically the issue at hand here is having a new covenant relationship with God the Father. When a veil is present there, you have an old covenant relationship where salvation is not on the table. There's not the opportunity to be born into the Kingdom of God. When the veil is removed what that's

telling us is it's basically symbolic of now that relationship is available. You are able to have a covenant relationship with the Father and the opportunity to be born into the Kingdom of God. As we're going to see, Jesus Christ is the mediator of this covenant, because He is the one who enabled the access to be able to get in here.

9) It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience —

10) concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. (NKJV)

As we're going to see, it's until the time not only of when Christ fulfilled His part of this as the sacrifice but also when that sacrifice is applied. We are going to see that issue here shortly. Continue in verses 11-12.

11) But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come ... (NKJV)

We know now what was pictured by the high priest going in this ceremony. It was picturing Jesus Christ coming before the Father's throne.

11b) ... with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.

12) Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. (NKJV)

Now we know what's pictured by the Lord's goat. You notice when he was instructing Aaron to do this, he was to go in as high priest with the blood of the Lord's goat that had already been sacrificed. He is bringing the blood into the most holy place. What it's telling us here is that Jesus Christ, not just the physical representation but the real throne of the Father, is going before Him as the High Priest with His own blood. In the symbolic version that was the blood of the Lord's goat. So, that tells us who the Lord's goat is. That pictures Christ. Now take note of the fact it's not telling us it just pictures a function of what Christ does and His sacrifice. It's telling us it pictures Him. When it says it's the Lord's goat, it's a picture of Him, because He is the one who died whose blood was sacrificed before and that blood being taken before the Father's throne. He is in both roles of the high priest and as the Lord's goat. That's what's playing out here.

Notice also it says it was done once and for all for everyone. That's going to become important here shortly. We are going to see He only did this once, but there are different stages of how this is applied to mankind. Pick up in verses 13-15.

13) For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh,

14) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15) And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (NKJV)

Notice it talks about “He is the mediator of” this covenant. He is the one who allows us access to the Father. As we are going to see here as we go through this sermon the sacrifice that He fulfilled to redeem all of mankind is what removes the veil and that enables us to have access to God the Father, to have a new covenant relationship with Him. Jesus Christ is what enables us to come to the Father. We pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, because He is the one who enabled us to have this access and to have this relationship. The whole issue again is access to the Father. That’s whose throne was on the mercy seat between the cherubim that was there in the most holy place. Go to verses 23-28.

23) Therefore it was necessary that the copies of the things in the heavens should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. (NKJV)

This is again telling us what was represented in the most holy place was a representation of the throne of God the Father. Christ didn’t go to the physical version of this. He went to the real thing before the Father’s throne.

24) For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; (NKJV)

He is going before the throne of the Father.

25) not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another —

26) He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

27) And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

28) so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation. (NKJV)

You see basically Christ is the mediator of the new covenant. He enables us to have that access to the Father.

Now what we need to understand is the veil in all of this. What we are going to see is this sacrifice removes the veil and allows us to have access and a relationship with God the Father. There is a great significance to this veil and what it pictures. Again, this is all about being able to have a new covenant relationship with God the Father. Turn to Hebrews 10:19-25.

Hebrews 10:19. *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, (NKJV)*

In other words what he is talking about here is basically having a new covenant relationship with the Father, but he is putting in the analogy of entering the most holy place by the blood of Christ. In other words being able to have that access.

20) by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil ... (NKJV)

He's what removes the veil.

*20b) ... that is, His flesh,
21) and having a High Priest over the house of God,
22) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.
24) And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,
25) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. (NKJV)*

Notice it's referring to being new covenant Christians and pursuing salvation; having that walk in our lives. But how is it talked about? Being able to go before the Father in the most holy place through the blood of Christ, because that's what it accomplishes. It enables us to have access to God the Father, because that's who we make that covenant with and that's who we pray to, that's who we worship, but again through Christ because His sacrifice is what enabled removal of that veil and that relationship to take place. That is made very clear for us in Matthew 27:50-54. You see what actually, not only symbolically, but physically played out here when Christ was sacrificed made abundantly clear what this pictures. This is at the very end of Christ's life right as He is dying on the stake.

Matthew 27:50. *And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit.*

51) Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split,

52) and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;

53) and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

54) So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (NKJV)

In other words this event got their attention. Notice what happened here. The veil in the most holy place was torn when He died. That tells us very directly what is pictured here. This was allowing that access. I want you to notice something here. When this tore this opened the door for a new covenant relationship for mankind, but let's also notice it didn't play out that this was torn and then all of a sudden immediately salvation is offered to all of mankind at that time. That's not how it happened, because you'll see that there was a small group of people that were offered salvation initially and the others offered later. It didn't all happen simultaneously right when this event took place. Yes, this was done once and for all, but it's applied to people at different times. The Bible directly tells us that even today for the majority of mankind the veil is still there. Notice that in 2 Corinthians 3:12-18.

2 Corinthians 3:12. *Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech —*

13) unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.

14) But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. (NKJV)

In other words Christ is the one who removes that, but it's only when His sacrifice is applied and salvation is offered that that veil is removed.

15) But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

16) Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17) Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

18) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (NKJV)

Again we're referring to the new covenant relationship and the ability to come into that relationship with God and have salvation and the chance of being born into the Kingdom of God. That is the entire significance of the veil. When you have a temple with a veil there, you are talking old covenant relationship. That's what a veil means. When the veil is removed, you're talking new covenant relationship; salvation on the table and the opportunity to be born into the Kingdom of God.

If you follow what we've covered today, of what is pictured in a lot of the parts of the Atonement ceremony here, you have a sacrifice for sins. Of course, it's pictured as a goat there. You have Christ dying for the sins. Then you have Christ going before the throne of the Father on behalf of the people presenting His blood basically as an atoning sacrifice to enable salvation. Doesn't this sound very familiar to some prior holy days that we keep earlier in the year? Doesn't this sound a bit redundant to the meaning of Passover and the wave sheaf? Isn't the exact same thing playing out here? Yes it is. As I mentioned here before, Christ only died once. His sacrifice was once for all, but it's applied at different times to different people. To understand the significance

of why you see this redundancy and why at Atonement we are kind of revisiting a lot of what was pictured in Passover and the wave sheaf. You have to understand the Bible tells us that Passover and the wave sheaf are specific to the firstfruits. Turn over to Exodus 12:21-30 and we'll see this in the story of Passover in the instructions of the original Passover. In reading this we have to ask the question, the Passover sacrifice when Ancient Israel followed the instructions and killed the lamb and did what they were told, who did that save? Who was protected as a result of that sacrifice? What you are going to see it is specifically the firstborn that this was involved in. All of the symbolism of Passover and the wave sheaf again are specifically stated as being exclusively for the firstfruits.

Exodus 12:21. *Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb.*

22) And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning.

23) For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.

24) And you shall observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever.

25) It will come to pass when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, just as He promised, that you shall keep this service.

26) And it shall be, when your children say to you, "What do you mean by this service?"

27) that you shall say, "It is the Passover sacrifice of the Lord, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households." So the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

28) Then the children of Israel went away and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did. (NKJV)

Let's notice who was protected.

29) And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock.

30) So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. (NKJV)

Notice that those who died were exclusively the firstborn. Just to illustrate this point imagine that you have a family that are Israelites and they're living in Egypt as slaves and Moses gives these instructions and what they are supposed to do. This family is a family of boneheads. They're just going to be rebellious and not go along with the instructions, so they ignore this and they don't kill the lamb and do what God said. The

only people in the house that would die as a result of this would be the firstborn. Everyone else in the family who was rebellious would still be alive the next morning. Again, this is specifically for the firstborn or firstfruits as we would call it. That's how this particularly applies. That's why we see this redundancy between Passover and Atonement, because Passover is specifically for the firstfruits. Atonement speaks to when this is applied to the rest of mankind.

The same can be said for the wave sheaf offering. The fulfillment of the wave sheaf (if you study this in what we discovered in regards to the ceremony for Atonement) plays out very much the same way. It pictures the same event that's taking place here. Let's turn over to Leviticus 23:9-14 and take a look at the instructions for the wave sheaf offering.

Leviticus 23:9. *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,
10) "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest.'" (NKJV)*

Notice this involved the early harvest in the year, which again is referred to as the firstfruits, and this is a portion of that. This is a sheaf of the firstfruits that they had to wave before they could even consume this harvest. As we're going to see, this is the first of the firstfruits. We are going to see here shortly that this ceremony is referred to in that terminology twice in the Bible as the first of the firstfruits. We are going to see in the New Testament who that refers to.

11) "He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted on your behalf;" ... (NKJV)

Notice this is done to be accepted on behalf of the firstfruits. It's for their benefit.

*11b) ... "on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it.
12) And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord.
13) Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin.
14) You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings." (NKJV)*

Notice the early harvest in the spring was kind of a firstfruits harvest. They had to take and wave this sheaf before the Lord before they were allowed to consume any of the rest of it. So, this is really the first of the firstfruits. The reason I mention that is it's mentioned twice in the book of Exodus. This is referred to with that terminology. Turn to Exodus 23:19.

Exodus 23:19. *"The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God." ... (NKJV)*

This is a brief reference, but it's referring here to again the wave sheaf. This was that first sheaf of the firstfruit harvest they had to bring before the Lord before they could consume the rest of it. Now turn over to Exodus 34:26 and you will see the exact same reference here.

Exodus 34:26. *"The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God." ... (NKJV)*

Notice once again it's referred to as the first of the fruits. It was that first portion of this firstfruits harvest. If you look at what that ceremony pictured, it is very much the exact same thing that we see with the high priest going before the throne with the blood of the Lord's goat there for the people. It's the same thing that's being pictured here. We can tell from the New Testament the first of the firstfruits being referred to here in the wave sheaf is Jesus Christ. Turn over to 1 Corinthians 15:20-23.

1 Corinthians 15:20. *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

Notice there's terminology. It includes Christ as one of the firstfruits.

21) *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.*

22) *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

23) *But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. (NKJV)*

We know those who are Christ's at His coming, that's the firstfruits group, but it's telling us He is a firstfruit, but He was first. He is glorified, made back into a God being a couple of thousand years before the rest of the firstfruits are brought up there. So, you can see the wave sheaf offering was a picture of Him. Again, the same thing is playing out here in this fulfillment as we see in the high priest coming with the Lord's goat's blood before the throne as an atonement for them. It is very much a duality, kind of a redundancy here.

One thing you need to see here as well. As I mentioned, the counter argument for what the Azazel goat pictures is the idea that both of these goats represent Christ. Basically, in that view Satan is not in this picture at all. Both of the goats picture Jesus Christ. What they picture and why there are two of them is because they picture different functions of what Jesus Christ accomplished. Now let's just follow that logic and entertain that argument for a moment. We have seen that there's a great redundancy between Passover and the wave sheaf and what we see playing out in Atonement. However, we have to ask a question, because the way that the people argue is they say basically the Lord's goat was obviously Christ covering our sins and kind of the standard

things that we've already covered. Their explanation for Azazel goat is they look at scriptures that say our sins are removed from us like the east is from the west. Well, this is a picture of that. This is Christ taking our sins and taking them away as far as the east is from the west. If in the Atonement ceremony both of these goats are Christ and both of these are functions of what He accomplishes, why is that whole concept of symbolism completely missing from Passover and the wave sheaf? We see everything else that plays out there is basically a duplicate of what we see of the high priest and the Lord's goat and all of this playing out. We see nothing in this picture that is a duality of this concept of Christ taking our sins away as far as the east is from the west.

The other thing to look at here is those that argue the idea that both goats picture Christ. Their response to the issue I just brought goes like this. Well, you have to see that the Passover is not really a sin offering. That's more of a peace offering. Atonement is really what atones for us and removes the veil and enables salvation and what was pictured in Passover was really just more showing favor to these people and it was not really a sin offering. Well, if that's the case, then the New Testament uses language to speak of Christ in this context that wouldn't match at all. As we're going to see, the Bible refers specifically to Christ and the lamb and his Passover both in the context of taking away our sins, atoning for our sins and enabling the new covenant relationship; again exactly the things that we see carried out in the symbolism of Atonement. To see that, turn over to John 1:29-34. We are going to see how John the Baptist referred to Jesus Christ. I want you to particularly take note of the language that he uses in doing this.

John 1:29. *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

30) This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'

31) I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

32) And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him.

33) I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

34) And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God." (NKJV)

Notice he specifically referred to Him as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." He is saying that basically as the Lamb of God He atones for mankind. As I mentioned, there is redundancy in Passover and in Atonement and what's pictured there. Again, Christ died only one time. He didn't go through this twice, but it's picturing it separately in terms of how it's applied. If you follow the logic of the argument, well Passover is not really atoning for sin. That's a peace offering showing favor. Why in the world would he refer to Him as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin? In atonement He is pictured as a goat. It's only at Passover that He is pictured as a lamb.

If Passover wasn't about being a sin sacrifice and atoning for our sin, that wouldn't make any sense.

We can also see that Paul speaks of it in this same language in regards to enabling the new covenant relationship, in other words the removing of the veil. Turn over to 1 Corinthians 5:6-8.

1 Corinthians 5:6. *Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*

7) Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

8) Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.
(NKJV)

Notice here he is referring to Him as Christ our Passover. It's all in the context of the new covenant relationship pursuing salvation. What enables that? Well, Christ's sacrifice that removes the veil enables access to come before the most holy place or the throne of the Father to make a covenant with the Father. Christ does this as mediator of the new covenant. If Passover didn't accomplish that and was just kind of a peace offering that kind of gave favor and didn't cover sin, why would he speak of it in this language? Obviously, it is accomplishing the same thing as what we see in Atonement. Again, it's just a question of when it's applied, because Passover and the wave sheaf are specific to the firstfruits whereas Atonement is addressing the issue of when this is applied to the rest of mankind. That's the whole issue of what's being covered in the Lord's goat and high priest taking the Lord's goat's blood before the throne. Again, that's the duality here. The distinguishing factor is when this is applied, because it's not applied to everyone at the same time.

Also notice everything that we have covered so far in the meaning of this has played out quite literally to the way the ceremony that the high priest played out on Atonement would do it. In other words you have the high priest bringing in the sacrifice. He's going before the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat that symbolizes God's throne. He is bringing the blood of the goat that symbolized Christ. How was all of that fulfilled? Christ went in not just the representation, but the real throne of the Father that was all pictured here as the high priest with His own blood to atone for this. It all plays out quite literally. The reason I'm pointing all of this out is if you take the idea that the Azazel goat also pictured Christ and what it's trying to teach us is how he takes our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west we now have an abstract concept that's being symbolized by this. There's nothing that played out here that is a literal fulfillment of this in terms of how it plays out. Remember that. We are going to come back to that concept.

Now let's also look at the issue of specifically the Azazel goat. Turn back to Leviticus 16:8. We are going to take a moment to look at this Hebrew word "Azazel." Again, there is a lot of debate about this. Quite frankly you can't definitively make a solid

argument one way or the other just simply based upon the meaning of the word here. There is lots of debate here. You can find all sorts of sources that will support all sorts of arguments. I am going to briefly discuss this.

Leviticus 16:8. *Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. (NKJV)*

Again, that's how the New King James Version translates the word and I think that's a poor translation. Notice that we have two goats. Only one is referred to specifically as the Lord's goat. The other is contrasted from it. If we look at the Hebrew word here that's translated in the New King James Version as "scapegoat" it's the word "Azazel." This gets problematic when you start trying to look at this word and nail anything down exactly for several reasons. One is this word is only used four times in the Bible. Every one of those occurrences is in this chapter. There's not anywhere else in the Bible where you can look in reference of this and say, okay let's use this to help clarify the meaning here, because there are no other uses to turn to. If you look in terms of lexicons or Strong's or other sources to get the meaning for this, you'll find lots of debate among commentaries as to what this means. In fact if you look it up in Strong's you'll see *goat of departure* is one of the meanings that it gives it

If you look in different translations, you'll see it translated as it says here in the New King James Version as "scapegoat." There are a number of translations that do that. Some call it goat of departure. Some treat Azazel as a location, like it's referred to as the Azazel goat because Azazel is the place where it's being taken off to. From the translations that I looked at the most common way that it is used and you can't say definitively that everybody does like this. I looked at twenty-six different translations of the Bible. Thirteen of those twenty-six treat Azazel as a name. In other words it just uses the word Azazel here and it capitalizes it. The way it's talked about is contrasted directly from the Lord's goat. Just to give you an example of that, see Leviticus 16:8 out of the American Standard Version. Here's how it's worded:

8) And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats, one lot for Jehovah and the other lot for Azazel. (ASV)

In other words it treats Azazel as a name. It says one's for Jehovah or for the Lord. The other is Azazel. In other words it's in contrast with the Lord. We also have to look at the fact that only one of them is referred to as the Lord's goat. That begs the question, if they both picture Him, why wouldn't you refer to both of them that way? That would just logically make sense. In the thirteen translations that I mentioned that use it as a name the Moffett actually translates the word as "Azazel the demon." That's the way it actually words it. Again, that's a translation choice. That's the only translation I could find that stated it directly like that. Those who have the alternative argument for what the Azazel goat means will quickly point this out to you that these things that point to it being a demon are outside the Bible. It's ancient literature. You will find it's a common thing in ancient literature to refer to Azazel in one way or another as a demonic figure, either chief of the demons or a desert demon or other types of

nuances and meaning with that, but as a demonic figure is what it indicates. That's where Moffett obviously got their idea in how they translated that. Personally, I think that's a very accurate way to look at it when you look at the total meaning of all of this. Again, one of the things that I pointed out here before is everything else that we see in this ceremony in Leviticus 16, literally when we look at the fulfillment of it in terms of the high priest and the Lord's goat and the sacrifice of it, taking the blood and all of this plays out literally when you look at the fulfillment of it. There's nothing in here that's an abstract concept. Also when we look at the connection between Passover and the wave sheaf and Atonement we see lots of redundancy here because again it's all picturing the same thing and the same meaning. It's just different times in which it's applied.

Then we have to first of all ask the question: Why would this concept be missing from Passover if it also is a part of Christ's sacrifice and what He does? That doesn't make sense. We also have to ask the question: Why would there just be once something is picturing here an abstract concept when everything else was quite literal in how it played out? Well, if we look at the idea of saying this refers to Satan, the references in ancient literature have given us some insight here of this referring to a demon, we can look forward to an event here that plays out just like everything else in this ceremony that's quite literal in what was pictured and how it's fulfilled. If you turn over to Revelation 20:1-3 we can see that. Remember with the Azazel goat what played out there is that the high priest laid his hands upon the goat, places the sins of all of the people on him and then this goat is taken by a fit man and is led off away into an uninhabited land and left there. So, basically it's pulled out away from everybody to a place where there are no inhabitants around it. Let's see if we have a picture in the Bible that matches that and plays out literally, just like everything else in Leviticus 16 does.

Revelation 20:1. *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
2) He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;
3) 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 (NKJV)*

Notice he's essentially in an uninhabited land where he can't affect anybody. We'll come back to this last sentence here shortly. Notice this plays out quite literally, just like what was pictured in the ceremony with the Azazel goat in Leviticus 16, which also matches just how everything else in that ceremony played out. Everything else played out quite literally to what it was picturing.

Before the goat was taken off into the wilderness by a fit man the high priest puts his hands on the goat's head placing all of the sins of the people on the goat. Why would you do that with Satan? You see, one of the counterarguments with this, with those that want to argue that Satan is not in this equation at all is that Satan would never be a part

of atoning for people's sins. He wouldn't be sacrificed for anybody. That's crazy. For starters that goat is not sacrificed. That goat is not killed. He is taken off alive, just away from everybody. Realize the logic in regards to a sacrifice doesn't apply to him. That goat is not killed. When you sacrifice an animal, you kill it. Why would the sins of all of the people be put upon this goat and him lead off? Turn over to Revelation 12:7-9. We will see the answer for that.

Revelation 12:7. *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,
8) but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.
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. (NKJV)*

It is telling us here that Satan is responsible for deceiving the entire world. In other words he plays a major role in leading mankind into sin. A great deal of responsibility can be laid upon him for this. Understand this doesn't mean that we as human beings can just say that the devil made me do it and I don't have any responsibility for my own choices. That's not true. When we look at the picture of mankind and all of the sins and atrocities that mankind has done, Satan plays a very major role in that whole situation. In fact that's why he's referred to as the god of this world. Turn over to 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

2 Corinthians 4:3. *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,
4) whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. (NKJV)*

He is referring to the god of this world as Satan. Realize the reason he's referred to as the god of this world is because the world looks to him and reveres him in that role in terms of how they live their lives. This doesn't mean that Satan is in charge and God is sitting back with His hands tied waiting for the day that He finally gets permission to do something with Satan to bind him. That is simply not true. He is the Most High God. He reigns in the kingdoms of men. He does whatever He wants to. No one is able to restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have you done?" There is never a time when Satan is in charge and God can't do anything about it. God has chosen to allow Satan to be here to play the role that he has for the overall good of mankind. Again, he plays an essential role in the process of salvation in the trials that we go through, the tests that we go through, the temptations help build character for us. It's not a situation where Satan is out and doing his thing, because God is helpless and can't do anything about it to prevent it. That is never the case. Again, He will remove him when He decides to do so, because He is fully in control all of the time. Notice also in John 8:42-44. What I want you to see here is not only is Satan responsible for his influence upon mankind and deceiving and trying to lead people into sin, it tells us he's the originator of sin.

John 8:42. *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.*

43) Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word.

44) 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. (NKJV)

Notice, he is the originator of sin. This is what it's telling us here with the Azazel goat and the sins being put upon him and him being taken away. The reason that that is the picture is because of the major role that Satan plays in causing mankind to sin. That's why the sins are put upon him and he's lead away for a thousand years. He is lead off into the wilderness, but what this is picturing is him being taken, as we read in Revelation 20 where an angel comes down, takes him to a bottomless pit, binds him for a thousand years where he cannot affect mankind and he can't have an influence on anybody else. He is essentially taken to an uninhabited land.

Notice there that goat doesn't die. There are a couple of lessons in that. One, as I mentioned, he is not a sacrifice. He is not involved in the sacrifice of atoning for our sins in that regard. He is simply being removed, that is taking away the sin in terms of the influence that causes mankind to sin. The other issue is that this also gives us a clear picture which is accurate with the Bible, because the movie doesn't end when Satan is taken away and bound away for a thousand years away from mankind. That's not the end of the story. Turn back over to Revelation 20:3, the last sentence after it refers to him being bound for the thousand years.

Revelation 20:3. *... But after these things he must be released for a little while. (NKJV)*

Skip over to verses 7-10.

7) Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison

8) 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.

9) 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.

10) The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (NKJV)

Notice here he is taken away and bound for a thousand years, just like we see with the picture of the Azazel goat, but the story doesn't end there, because he's not done. God has other purposes for him as well and He brings him back later. Oftentimes we scratch our head and wonder why would God do that? The answer is simple for the exact reason He tolerates him today. He is not tolerating him today because God's hands are tied behind his back and He is waiting for permission to be allowed to remove him. No, He did it on purpose. He is the most high God. No one is able to restrain His hand or say to Him, "What have you done?" He did it for a purpose, because the role that Satan plays in tempting and trying us. Our striving against that develops godly character. See, he comes back later because God has more for him to do. When you think about the two goats here, I think we can clearly see here that the Azazel goat is not a picture of Jesus Christ. This is picturing Satan and what will play out here.

Let's also look at one other thing here. There are two goats in this ceremony. Why does he have two goats here picturing these two different things? There are two major phases in the plan of God going forward. What immediately happens after we have the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement? We get to the Feast of Tabernacles. This is a thousand year period that we know when Satan is bound. Mankind gets a break from him. We have a wonderful physical utopian environment. One of the major things that enables that to happen is Satan being bound as part of the picture. As we know, his job is not done yet. He comes back later, but we have another holy day to fulfill don't we. We have the Last Great Day, which pictures the white throne judgment period when all of mankind is brought up and offered salvation when the veil is removed, when they are enabled and given the opportunity to have a new covenant relationship with God and the opportunity to be born into the Kingdom of God. See, this is what the Atonement ceremony is telling us. It's picturing what comes forward from hearing how God is dealing with the issue of sin throughout the rest of the plan of God.

The key to understanding all of this is again realizing the redundancy between Atonement and Passover and the wave sheaf. Again, it all pictures the same thing. It simply comes down to the same meaning. Christ died once for all. He only went through it once, but it's applied at different times. The veil isn't removed for everyone all at the same time. It's done first for the firstfruits and then later for all of mankind. That's what this ceremony is teaching us.

Brethren, as we go forward in keeping the rest of these holy days; next week we'll all be keeping the Day of Atonement picturing all of these events and then soon we'll be keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. Let's reflect upon these events and be thankful for the fact that God has foretold for us all that will play out here. Also, not only that but just to appreciate the incredible honor that we have been given now and that all of mankind will be given later, to be able to come before the throne in the most holy place before God the Father, the Most High God, and to have a direct relationship with Him and the opportunity to be His son.