

The Scapegoat

SUBSTITUTIONARY AND EXPIATORY ATONEMENT

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1. “Just what is the relationship between Jesus’ atonement on the cross for my sins, and Satan’s punishment!” Strictly speaking, there is no “relationship” between these two events or experiences: it is contrast here, rather than comparison. Christ was punished, He suffered, expiated, atoned for my sins; while Satan is punished - suffers, expiates, atones for his own sins, one of which was causing me to sin. The terms “atone” and “atonement” do not always, nor necessarily, contain the vicarious idea. The final death of any sinner fully expiates for his own sins, but leaves him dead and hopeless forever and eternally. Christ’s death, being vicarious or a substitution, was not eternal, for He had never sinned; therefore God could justly raise Him up. The sins for which Jesus suffered and died were not His own; while the sins for which Satan will suffer and die are his own, Satan is the primal cause of every sin ever committed, so it is just that he should be punished for all. It is also just that I, as a participating criminal with him, should share his punishment, and only the vicarious punishment of my Substitute prevents this. But the expiation of my guilt by my Substitute should not, and does not, excuse the one who caused me to sin nor lessen his punishment.

2. “Did not Jesus’ death completely satisfy the demands of the law for my sins?” Yes: but it did not satisfy the demands of the law for Satan’s sin in causing me to sin. Satan himself must suffer for that.

3. “Then what part does the death of Satan play as relates to my sin?” “The only part Satan’s death plays concerning my sins is to punish him for inducing me to sin. My part in the sin-that of yielding to Satan’s temptation -was punished, expiated, and atoned for by the suffering and death of my Substitute.

4. “Does Satan in any degree bear the punishment of the sins of my personal choice!” “No; Satan does not in any degree bear the punishment or penalty of my sins. His punishment is solely for his own sins, one of which was that of causing me to sin.

5. “Are these two punishments for the phase of the same sin!” “No; Jesus’ suffering and death were the punishment and penalty of my sins in co-operating with Satan. Satan’s suffering and death are the punishment and penalty of his own sin in tempting me to sin.

It should be clearly understood and emphasized that, while death is the final penalty for all sin, it is preceded by suffering proportional to the measure of guilt. Every sin, by angelic or human beings, from first to last, constitutes a separate charge against, Satan, for he is the primal instigator of every sin; therefore, he must be punished and suffer for all sin. Christ’s vicarious suffering and death for our sins does not expiate nor excuse Satan’s guilt for inducing us to sin, nor lessen nor obviate its penalty. Neither does the suffering and death of Satan’s unrepentant partners in sin lessen his punishment for causing them to sin. Satan must bear the full penalty for his part in all. Every act of God in dealing with the great tragedy of sin is but the outworking and manifestation of eternal principles clearly expressed in the Scriptures. Righteousness and life are identical, one and inseparable. “In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.” Proverbs 12:28. And even so, sin and death are inseparably interwoven, for sin, when it is finished, brings forth death.” (James 1:15), and “the wages of sin is death.” Romans 6:23.

So let it never be forgotten that there is no compromise, but rather eternal, deadly enmity and antagonism between righteousness and sin, life and death, either of which, when in the ascendancy, never stops short of the utter annihilation of the other. Let it be in, everlasting remembrance that, while God “is merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,” He “will by no means clear the guilty.” Exodus 34:6-7. “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.” Romans 1:18. “Without shedding of blood [the forfeiture of life] is no remission.” Hebrews 9:22. “Every transgression and disobedience” must and shall receive “a just recompense of reward,” and this includes the angels that sinned. Hebrews 2:2. (See Jude 1:5-7.)

And the plan of redemption, the atonement, the mercy of God, and the forgiveness of sins does not change or supplant this solemn, awful, yet blessed truth. No sin, great or small, from the first sin committed by Lucifer to the last sin of eternity’s tragedy, will ever disappear until it is wiped out in suffering, blood, and death. Sins repented of, confessed, forsaken, and laid on the divine Substitute, are punished, expiated, atoned for, and blotted out of the record books, and the soul of the penitent sinner is cleared by Christ’s suffering and death. But these sins are retained in the “book of death” (if the expression may be permitted), to be finally laid on the head of the great instigator of them all.

The superficial, erroneous view held by some, is that only confessed sins were laid on the scapegoat. But the goat on which the Lord's lot fell was "for the people," "for the congregation," "for the children of Israel." (See Leviticus 16, especially verses 15-22.) This is the typical assurance that the Lamb of God bears in His own body to the tree and on the tree the sins of the whole world. (See John 1:9, margin; 1 Peter 2:21-24, margin; John 3:17; 4:42; 6:33, 55; 1 John 2:2.)

The placing of confessed sins on the Lord's goat, together with its death, did not prevent those same sins from being laid on the head of the scapegoat. Unrepentant sinners were "cut off from among the people," even though an offering had been made for their sins. (See Leviticus 23:26-30.) In like manner, an ample, all-sufficient offering has been made for the sins of the whole world. Acceptance of this offering releases those who so accept, from the penalty of their sins, but does not release the one who caused them to sin. Those who "neglect so great salvation," along with the one who caused them to sin, must finally suffer the penalty of their sin as verily as if no offering had ever been made for them.

Thus it must be evident to every candid, unbiased mind, that the atonement attributed to the scapegoat in Leviticus 16:10 is not the substitution kind, but the expiatory kind.

Testimony of Standard Christian Writers

"Azazel, is a transliteration of the Hebrew word translated in the Authorized Version (Leviticus 16:8, sq.) 'scapegoat.' There has been much discussion regarding the meaning of the term. Some take it to be the name of a region, 'the desert,' others of a person to whom the goat was sent. The latter opinion is favored by the best scholars, and they hold that reference is made to Satan. The goat that was sent away typified the removing of the guilt of the people." - Sanford's Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

"Some interpret this word as referring to a demon of the wilderness, and explain the term as 'one who has separated himself from God,' or 'he who has separated himself,' or 'he who misleads others.' In later times the word 'Azazel' was by many Jews and also by Christian theologians, such as Origen, regarded as that Satan himself who had fallen away from God." - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, article "Azazel."

"The contrast between 'for Yahweh [Jehovah], and 'for Azazel' favors the interpretation of Azazel as a proper noun and a reference to Satan suggests itself." - The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge.

"But there is still another class of writers who are disposed to claim for the word a more distinctly personal existence, and who would refer it directly to Satan. This view is certainly of high antiquity, and is expressed in the reading of the Septuagint, *opopompaios*, which means, not scapegoat, or sent away, but the turner away, the averter. It was very common with the rabbis, as in later times it has the support of many authorities.

"These writers [Spenser, Ammon, Rosenmuller, Geaenlus, Witaius, Meyer, Alting, Hengstenberg, and Vailhinger] hold that the view in question best preserves the contrast between the two goats -one foil Jehovah, and one for the great adversary, Azazel - the latter a being as well as the former. The goat [scapegoat] was no sacrifice, but rather a witness that the accepted sacrifice had been made." McClintock and Strong's Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Cyclopedia, Volume IX, article "Scapegoat."

"Azazel [quoting Vailhinger], the abominable, the sinner from the beginning (John 8: 44), is the one from whom they have proceeded, and to whom they must again with abhorrence be sent back, after the solemn atonement and absolution of the congregation have been accomplished." Ibid.

"Now, in respect to language, there can be no objection to interpreting Azazel as meaning Satan."- Kitto's Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature, art. "Goat, scape."

"a The manner in which the phrase 'for Azazel' is contrasted with 'for Jehovah,' necessarily requires that Azazel should denote a personal existence, and, If so, only Satan can be intended.

"b If by Azazel, Satan is not meant, there is no ground for the lots that were cast. We can then see no reason why the decision was referred to God; why the high priest did not simply assign one goat for a sin offering, and the other for sending away into the desert. The circumstance that lots are cast implies that Jehovah is made the antagonist of a personal existence, with respect to which it is designed to exalt the unlimited power of Jehovah, and to exclude all equality of this being with Jehovah.

"c Azazel, as a word of comparatively infrequent formation, and only used here, is best fitted for the designation of Satan."- Hengstenberg.

"Many think Azazel to be the devil, to whom, as the source of sin, 'the entirely separate one,' the scapegoat, with its load of sin was sent." Fausset Bible Encyclopedia, art. "Atonement. Day of."

“Others who have studied the subject most closely take Azazel for a personal being.” - Smith’s Bible Dictionary, article “Atonement, Day of.”

“The greater number of critics are however inclined to take Azazel as the name of an evil spirit. Origen expressly says that Azazel denoted the devil.” - The Bible Commentary. Edited by F. C. Cook, MA, Canon of Exeter.

“Many modern scholars agree that it [Azazel] designates the personal being to whom the goat was sent, probably Satan.” - The International Bible Dictionary, article “Atonement, Day of.”

“Azazel, scapegoat, A.V.; ‘removal,’ R.V. margin (Leviticus 16:8, 10, 26): A name used in connection with one of the goats selected for the service of the day of atonement. Leviticus 23:26 ff. It is not, however, the name of the goat, for that was entitled ‘unto Azazel’ just as the other goat was entitled ‘unto Jehovah.’ Azazel must, therefore, be the name either of the act of sending the goat away into the wilderness, or preferably, of the person to whom it was sent, possibly a demon in the wilderness.

“Apart from this ceremony, however, it is not easy to trace the existence of belief in such a person among the Israelites, although it was common enough among other peoples (Wellhausen, “*Reste arabischen Heidentums*,” pages 135-140) in Israel it survived as a shadowy vestige of primitive Semitic demonology, and was used to express the thought that sin belongs to a power or principle hostile to Jehovah, and its complete purgation must include its being sent back to its source.” - A New Standard Bible Dictionary.

“Far from involving the recognition of Azazel as a deity, the sending of the goat was, as stated by Nahmanides, a symbolic expression of the idea that the people’s sins and their evil consequences were to be sent back to the spirit of desolation and ruin, the source of all impurity.” - The Jewish Encyclopedia, article “Azazel,” Volume 2, page 366.

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