

A photograph of a white goat standing in a field. The goat is facing right and has a white coat with some darker markings on its legs. The background is a blurred, natural setting with green grass and trees.

Chasing Scapegoats

Leviticus 16:5-10, 20-22

Background

- Ancient Syria - Elini elimination rite
- Ancient Greece - Driving out the pharmikos
- The Law of Moses - the scapegoat (Hebrew) la-aza'zeyl; “for absolute removal” (Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon)
- In the Christian Dispensation, this process prefigures the sacrifice of Christ on the cross through which God has been satisfied and sins taken away.

Two Goats Are Selected

- Their Source

- Lev. 16:5-8 - “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. 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.”

Two Goats Are Selected

- “Of the congregation”: These goats were ordinary. They were not held to the same standards as other offerings. They were not special.
- Jesus
 - Isa. 53:2 - “He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him.”
 - Matt. 13:54-55 - “And when He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? 55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas?”

Two Goats Are Selected

- Their Sanctification
 - The goats were presented to the Lord and were set apart as holy.
- Jesus is pure, sinless and holy
 - 1Peter 2:22 - “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”

Two Goats Are Selected

- 2Cor. 5:21 - “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
- Heb. 4:15 - “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”
- 1John 3:5 - “and you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.”

Two Goats Are Selected

- Their Selection - By casting of lots; reinforces the point that one was not more special than the other
 - Ecc. 9:11 - “I returned and saw under the sun that-
The race is not to the swift, Nor the battle to the strong, Nor bread to the wise, Nor riches to men of understanding, Nor favor to men of skill; But time and chance happen to them all.”

Two Goats Are Selected

- There were two goats; they just served two different purposes:
- The Lord's Goat - Was to serve as an atoning sacrifice
 - 1John 2:2 - “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”

Two Goats Are Selected

- Heb. 9:24-28 - “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; 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.”

Two Goats Are Selected

- There were two goats; they just served two different purposes:
- The Living Goat - Was to serve as a substitute for the people. It symbolized the removal of their sins.
 - Heb. 2:9 - “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”

Two Goats Are Selected

- Isa. 53:5 - “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.”
- 1Peter 2:24 - “who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness--by whose stripes you were healed.”

One Goat Is Sacrificed

- The Pain
 - Lev. 1:8-9 - “Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that is on the fire upon the altar; 9 but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.”
- The altar of Moses was a horizontal pile of stone; the altar of Christ was an upright wooden cross, but the process was painful and the purpose was the same.

One Goat Is Sacrificed

- Isa. 52:14 - “Just as many were astonished at you,
So His visage was marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men”
- Psalm 22:6-7, 15, 17 - “But I am a worm, and no
man; A reproach of men, and despised by the
people. 7 All those who see Me ridicule Me; They
shoot out the lip, they shake the head... 15 My
strength is dried up like a potsherd, And My
tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me
to the dust of death... 17 I can count all My
bones. They look and stare at Me.”

One Goat Is Sacrificed

- The Purpose - To atone for sin
 - Rom. 6:23 - “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
 - Heb. 9:22 - “And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission.”
 - Rev. 1:5 - “and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood”

One Goat Is Sent Away

- Lev. 16:10, 20-22 - “But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness... 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.”

One Goat Is Sent Away

- The first goat speaks of Christ's substitutionary death on the cross to satisfy God by paying man's sin debt.
- The second goat speaks of the results of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, the removal of all the sins of those who obey the gospel.

One Goat Is Sent Away

- Sin Transferred - What was confessed was:
 - Iniquity - means “that which is bent or crooked” - Rom. 3:10-12, 23
 - Transgression - means “rebellion; to step over a boundary” - James 2:10
 - Sin - means “to miss, or to fall short”; describes our inability to ever fully measure up to God - Rom. 3:23

One Goat Is Sent Away

- He carried all of our sins
 - Isa. 53:6 - “All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”
 - 2Cor. 5:21 - “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”
 - Matt. 27:46 - “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”
- Somewhere during those dark hours on the cross, God the Father placed every sin of every human on the person of His Son. At that moment, God judged Jesus in the place of every sinner.

One Goat Is Sent Away

- Sin Taken Away - Jesus has the power to remove sin forever
 - Isa. 53:4 - “Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows”
 - 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!”

One Goat Is Sent Away

- Psalm 103:12 - “As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”
- Micah 7:19 - “He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins Into the depths of the sea.”
- 1John 1:7 - “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

One Goat Is Sent Away

- Jesus was also the “Fit Man” or “Suitable Man”
 - He knew the way to the wilderness.
 - He was able to endure to the end.
 - He was able to withstand the ordeal: loneliness, fatigue, thirst, isolation
 - He would not stop short of the goal.
 - He could find His way back again.

Chasing Scapegoats

- Jer. 50:20 - "In those days and in that time," says the LORD, 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."
- Psalm 38:4 - "For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me."
- Rom. 7:22-25 - "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God-- through Jesus Christ our Lord!"