



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Leviticus 16:22

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

*New King James Version*

This verse stipulates that the [azazel](#) must “bear on itself all their iniquities to *an uninhabited land*” (emphasis ours throughout). The Hebrew word for “uninhabited land” (*Strong's* #1509; used only here) literally means “a land cut off.” It derives from *Strong's* #1504, defined as “to cut down or off; (figuratively) to destroy, divide, exclude, or decide.”

Jeremiah, the presumptive author of Lamentations, employs this root to describe the state of death: “The waters flowed over my head; I said, ‘I am cut off!’” ([Lamentations 3:54](#)). [Isaiah 53:8](#), part of a Messianic prophecy, uses it similarly: “He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who will declare His generation? For He was *cut off* from the land of the living; for the transgressions of My people He was stricken.”

[Jesus Christ](#) was cut off from the land of the living; He was taken to “a land cut off.” Similarly, Psalm 88, a Messianic psalm, also describes the Messiah as being “cut off” and put into a “land of forgetfulness”:

Adrift among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom  
You remember no more, and who are *cut off* from Your hand. . . .  
Shall Your wonders be known in the dark? And Your righteousness  
in the *land of forgetfulness*? ([Psalm 88:5](#), 12)

These terms are figurative language for the grave, where no thought or memory occurs, nor knowledge or device ([Psalm 6:5](#); [Ecclesiastes 9:5](#), 10). In taking our sins to the “land cut off” and to the “land of forgetfulness,” they are not merely paid for but ultimately forgotten.

In common usage, “forget” and its forms indicate activities of the mind. However, in Hebrew thought, “forgetting” goes beyond the mental realm and into that of action, that is, forgetting contains an act that demonstrates that the forgotten thing is no longer a factor. The Hebrew words for *forget*—*shâkah* (#7911) and *nâshâh* (#5382)—mean “to ignore,” “to neglect,” “to forsake,” or “to willfully act in disregard to a person or thing.”

When [God](#) forgets our sins, He makes a conscious choice to ignore them—to forsake their occurrence, as it were; to disregard them—so that His actions are not swayed by what we have done. We may still feel other effects from our sins, but as far as God is concerned, He no longer looks at us through the lens of those transgressions. They have been borne away.

Jesus Christ fulfills all aspects of this unique [sin offering](#): His shed blood paid for sin, and He bore those sins to the land of forgetfulness—to the grave—completely removing them from view. Thus, [Hebrews 9:28](#) says that when He appears a second time, it will be “apart from sin.” In [Isaiah 43:25](#), God says, “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.” [Isaiah 53:6](#) states that “the LORD has laid on Him [the Messiah, not [Satan](#)] the iniquity of us all.” It is already finished—we are not still [waiting](#) for those transgressions to be sent away in the future.

Similarly, under the New Covenant, He promises, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” ([Jeremiah 31:34](#)). Jesus bore sin out of sight, being cut off.

— David C. Grabbe

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