



"The ultimate test of our spirituality is the measure of our amazement at the grace of God."

—D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

07-Sep-18

## *Why Two Goats on Atonement? (Part One)*

In [Galatians 3:24](#), the apostle Paul tells his audience that the law "was our tutor to bring us to [Christ](#), that we might be justified by [faith](#)." He writes in a similar way to the Christians in Rome, "Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes" ([Romans 10:4](#), *New International Version*). [God](#) intended the law He gave through [Moses](#) to point the Israelites to their future Messiah, and perhaps nowhere is this seen more plainly than in the animal sacrifices He required.

Each sacrificial animal—of every specified species, age, and gender—testifies of the Savior in some facet. Each must be unblemished; each represents a pure and innocent life given to instruct God's people about sin, devotion, fellowship, uncomplaining service, or other essential matters. God dedicates a substantial, even surprising, amount of space to specific instructions about what animals should be used for which occasions and who should be involved, along with a multitude of details concerning what should be done with the blood, entrails, hide, and meat. None of these details is redundant; we should not overlook even one word of God's revelation. Such instructions may not stir us like other sections of Scripture, yet the Creator teaches us critical things even in the jots and tittles.

Each year on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), the high priest performed an elaborate ceremony consisting of four sacrificial animals (see Leviticus 16). He offered a

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ram as a burnt offering, a bullock as a [sin offering](#) for the high priest and his household, and two goats together as a sin offering. These two goats receive the most attention on this day. A vital detail in this ceremony is that the two goats *together* accomplish atonement for the nation.

Notice [Leviticus 16:5](#): "And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel [two kids of the goats](#) as a [singular] *sin offering*" (emphasis ours throughout). This instruction is unusual, for the ordinary sin offering consisted of a single animal (see [Leviticus 4:3](#), 14, 23, 28; 5:6-7). Why did God command two animals as the sin offering for the nation?

To answer this question, we must first examine the typical sin offering, outlined in Leviticus 4. There, God commands four slightly different rituals, depending on who had committed the unintentional sin: a priest (verses 3-12), the whole congregation (verses 13-21), a leader of the people (verses 22-26), or an individual (verses 27-31).

Regardless of the transgressor, though, the priest conducted the same basic procedure—one to take note of, for it helps to explain the Day of Atonement ceremony. In the standard sin offering, the guilty party first laid his hands on the sacrificial animal ([Leviticus 4:4](#), 15, 24, 29). This action symbolized the innocent animal taking the place of the sinner, figuratively transferring the guilt of the person to the animal. Second, the animal was killed. Third, the priest sprinkled some of its blood in front of the veil, and he put some on the horns of either the golden altar (used for incense) or the brazen altar (used for burnt offerings), depending on who sinned. He poured the rest of the blood at the base of the brazen altar. Finally, select parts of the animal were burned on the brazen altar, while the rest of the animal was burned outside the camp.

The procedure for the sin offering essentially ends there, but more needs to be considered. The offering has symbolically cleansed the guilty party, but is the sin truly gone? In this regard, the [book of Hebrews](#) teaches us that 1) animal blood is used for symbolic *cleansing* and *purification* ([Hebrews 9:13](#), 22); but 2) the blood of bulls and goats cannot *take away* sins ([Hebrews 10:4](#)). In the ritual of the sin offering, then, the transgressor is symbolically cleansed, yet his sin is not taken away—it cannot be removed simply through the shedding of animal blood.

To further understand the symbolism of blood and sin, remember that God repeatedly prohibits the eating of blood ([Genesis 9:4](#); [Leviticus 7:26-27](#); [17:10-14](#); [19:26](#); [Deuteronomy 12:16](#)). Even though the animal to be eaten is dead, God still considers the blood of the animal to contain the life of the animal! [Deuteronomy 12:23](#) proclaims, "Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, for *the blood is the life*; you may not eat *the*

*life with the [lifeless] meat.*" Blood is a symbol of life, even after the heart has stopped! It is a representation—even a record—of the life lived. Thus, the first usage of blood in Scripture is anthropomorphic: God considered Abel's blood to have a voice even after Cain had cut his life short by violence ([Genesis 4:10](#)).

If the blood of an unblemished animal represents an innocent life, the blood of an animal upon whose head sins have been transferred represents a sinful life. Therefore, while the transgressor is symbolically cleansed of his sins after laying his hands on an innocent animal and shedding its blood, the substituted blood still bore witness—a record—of the transgression. In some scenarios, priests could eat the meat of a sin offering, but because of the symbolic defilement of the blood, if any of its blood got on the priests' garments, they had to be washed ([Leviticus 6:27](#)). There is no such proscription for the blood of burnt offerings or [peace](#) offerings, which do not involve sin.

Because of this symbolic, sin-carrying quality of blood, it is as if the horns of the golden or incense altar—covered with the blood of countless substitutionary animals—became a repository for all the nation's sins, sins that still had to be taken away (compare [Jeremiah 17:1](#)). This is shown by God's command that the incense altar—specifically the horns, where the defiled blood was placed—had to be cleansed once a year:

And Aaron shall make atonement upon [the altar's] horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It is most holy to the LORD."  
([Exodus 30:10](#))

The incense altar was symbolically cleansed once a year through the high priest "mak[ing] atonement" upon it, meaning he would cover it with blood that did *not* represent sin. This verse gives the essence of what was to happen on the Day of Atonement, while Leviticus 16 provides all the specifics of how God's instructions were to be carried out.

In Part Two, we will look at the annual cleansing and removal of sin, and see plainly why two goats were required.

- David C. Grabbe

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## *World News Highlights*

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**[Water Levels Continue to Drop at Lake Mead, Lake Powell](#)**

The Denver Post 03-Sep-18

**[The Chaos Left Behind by Typhoon Jebi, Seen From the Air](#)**

Quartz 05-Sep-18

**[If Pope Francis Resigns Over the Sex Abuse Scandal, the Catholic Church Could Fall Apart](#)**

The Spectator 28-Aug-18

**[Global Debt Soars, Along With Fears of Crisis Ahead](#)**

The Savannah Morning News 03-Sep-18

**[The Loneliness Effect](#)**

The US News and World Report 06-Sep-18

**[Investors Increasingly Engaged on World Water Issues](#)**

Forbes 29-Aug-18

**[Assad Readies Last Major Showdown of Syria War](#)**

Bloomberg 05-Sep-18

**[Global Finance 'As Vulnerable' as in 2008: Ex-Ecb Chief](#)**

Yahoo/AFP 03-Sep-18

**[Brexit News Latest: Brits Would Vote 59-41 to Remain in EU if Second Referendum Was Held, New Poll Shows](#)**

The Evening Standard 05-Sep-18

**[High-Stakes Diplomacy as Battle for Syria's Idlib Looms](#)**

Associated Press 07-Sep-18

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*New Transcripts*

**[1449c: Honor the King](#)**

Given by Richard T. Ritenbaugh on 01-Sep-18

**[928c: God Has the Last Word](#)**

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 21-Mar-09

## *Prayer Requests*

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[Deana Garrett](#)

[Pat Higgins](#)

[Gary Montgomery](#)

[Gary Montgomery](#)

[Gary Montgomery](#)

[Craig Sablich](#)

[Kondwhani Sakala](#)

[Kondwhani Sakala](#)

[Ronita Yariv](#)

[Russel Young](#)

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## *From the Archives: Featured Sermon*

[The Sacrifices of Leviticus \(Part 1\)](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

John Ritenbaugh compares the multi-faceted, infinite, marvelously complex, and perfect works of God with the limited, flawed works of man. Like geodes, hiding magnificent structural and aesthetic designs, the biblical types, emblems, or allegories are deceptively simple on the surface, but deep, complex, and awesome as one begins to scrutinize. Sometimes the least favorite scriptures yield the most profound lessons. As Christ is represented in the sacrificial types of Leviticus, we must apply these principles, examples, and lessons to our own lives, applying intense effort and diligence to extract the meaning that these densely packed types have for us.

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## *From the Archives: Featured Article*

[Who Fulfills the Azazel Goat—Satan or Christ? \(Part One\)](#)

by David C. Grabbe

CGG Weekly: Why Two Goats on Atonement? (Part One) (07-Sep-18)

For years, the church of God has taught that the Azazel goat, found in the instructions for the Atonement (Yom Kippur) offering in Leviticus 16, represented Satan taking man's sins on his own head and being led into outer darkness, taking sin with him. However, Scripture does not support this interpretation. David Grabbe focuses on the inappropriateness of Satan as a sacrifice for sin, as well as what the Bible shows that the Azazel goat actually accomplishes.

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## *Featured Audio Schedule*

### **Friday Night Bible Study**

The next Bible Study will be **The Commandments (Part 14)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 07-Sep-18**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

### **Daily Audio Programs**

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage](#).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>
Sunday 09-Sep-18	Is Mary Worthy of Worship?
Monday 10-Sep-18	What Does It Mean to 'Walk in the Spirit'?
Tuesday 11-Sep-18	Considering the Day of the Lord
Wednesday 12-Sep-18	A Pillar of Salt
Thursday 13-Sep-18	Think on This
Friday 14-Sep-18	Intimacy with Christ (Part 3)

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