



**A**ND he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering. 6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house. 7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. 8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. (Leviticus 16:5-8)<sup>1</sup>

The tenth day of the month of Tishrei in the Hebrew ecclesiastical calendar (the first month in the civil calendar) marks the observance of the Day of Atonement. It usually occurs in September-October of our calendar. That day is set aside for prayer, fasting and repentance. In the larger sense, every day is a day of atonement for the Christian since our great sacrifice has been made, once and for all, for us. That sacrifice represents the greatest act of grace from Creation to the present moment – in fact, in eternity. As an act of unmerited grace, it placed the elect of God at one with God – you might say, ‘AT-ONE-MENT.’

How was this sacrifice foreshadowed in our biblical text today? We have a very clear example in the story of the two goats – one for sacrifice and one as a Scapegoat. In effect, both goats represent the same sacrificial act. Two goat kids are selected to be presented before the Lord.



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<sup>1</sup> Please read the more complete account in Leviticus 16:1-28

The first goat was sacrificed as a sin offering, since *'without the shedding of blood there is no remission'* of sin. (see Hebrew 9:22) This goat represents our Lord Jesus Christ in His act of sacrifice at Calvary. He paid the penalty for our sin and satisfied the terms of the law – even in His death. In this respect, our Lord is represented by this first goat sacrificed. Our Lord died in His human nature, but arose from the grave in His divine nature.



The second goat, *Azazel* (or Scapegoat), escaped alive as a representative of the resurrected, living Christ, but in the prescribed manner. *And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.* Aaron, the High Priest, lays both hands on the head of the Scapegoat to signify an offering for sin requiring repentance, but also the required confession of sins without which there is no forgiveness. Why were both goats imputed with the sins of the people? The first to show that the *wages of sin is death*, (Romans 8:23); and the second symbolizing the resurrection of Christ and our rising with Him from the death of sin to the life of grace.

The entirety of the sins of the people were laid upon the Scapegoat who bore them all Himself both to the grave and in the resurrection, bearing the scars of His death in the wounds of the Cross. He was led into the wilderness where no man lived. This is much like our Lord's being driven into the Wilderness immediately following His baptism.

John the Baptist was referred to as *"the voice of one crying in the wilderness."* A friend of mine made a remark on my devotion, *FADED GLORY*, which he shared, *"the voice of one crying in the wilderness."* That description was not intended to apply alone to my devotion, but to every faithful Christian minister or layperson who proclaims the true

Gospel in the face of a world of derision. The world itself is a Wilderness of Sin through which we must pass, but not join.

The Scapegoat, a He-goat, was taken far into the wilderness where return was not possible. He bore our repented sins, like Christ did on the cross, in an uninhabited land – much like the uninhabited world of the dead to which Christ descended and conquered. *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* (Isaiah 53:6) But when those are carried off into the Wilderness of Sin and of no return, they will not be remembered anymore forever. *“I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”* (Jeremiah 31:34)

The Wilderness is a distant land of forgottenness. How far does the Scapegoat carry our sins into the Wilderness? *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”* (Psalm 103:12)

When we lay our hands upon the head of the Scapegoat, or of Christ, to confess them in repentance, we leave none at the door unconfessed – but ALL sin. Our Lord has separated our sins from our account in Heaven. They are totally remitted! If they have been carried as far as the east from the west (Psalm 103:12), how far is that distance in the nearest light year?

There are depths of the sea that have never been fathomed nor explored. The Marianna Trench provides the most profound example measuring more than 7 miles of depth. But there are thousands of other basins of the sea that may be of less depth, but nevertheless unexplored.



I would not wish to be the first deep-sea explorer to reach the utter depths of the sea. Why not? Can you imagine the profuse abundance of sins to be found there? *“He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”* (Micah 7:19) I say this in jest; however, the point is made nonetheless.