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Frank W. Nelte

WHO IS THE AZAZEL GOAT?

About 23 years ago, back in 1995, I wrote two very short articles about the Day of Atonement and the Old Testament ceremony attached to that day. One article was titled "The Azazel Goat of Leviticus 16 Pictures Satan's Fate", and the other article was simply titled "The Day of Atonement". This present article is replacing the first of those two articles on my website.

In those two articles I explained that the second goat, also known as the goat for Azazel, represents Satan and Satan's fate. Now last year David C. Grabbe of the Church of the Great God presented a series of articles in which **he asserts** that **the Azazel goat refers to Jesus Christ**. And since last year I have been contacted by several different people regarding those articles.

Either way there is a huge blasphemy involved with this subject!

Thus:

If the Azazel goat really represents Jesus Christ:

then it is extremely offensive to Jesus Christ for me to say that this goat represents Satan! It would in fact be a blasphemous teaching. And blasphemy leads to the lake of fire. And one immediate consequence would be that I most definitely could no longer be a servant of Jesus Christ ... because upon examination I have refused to reject an erroneous old teaching, which old teaching is highly insulting and extremely offensive to Jesus Christ (i.e. if the Azazel goat really does represent Christ).

On the other hand:

If the Azazel goat represents Satan:

then it is extremely offensive to Jesus Christ for the Church of the Great God to say that this goat represents Jesus Christ. It would in fact likewise be a blasphemous teaching. And blasphemy leads to the lake of fire. And one immediate consequence would be that the authors of this teaching can no longer be servants of Jesus Christ ... because they have rejected a true teaching, and in its place accepted a teaching that is highly insulting and extremely offensive to Jesus Christ.

It has to be the one or the other, and there is no middle ground. And either option (either imputing Jesus Christ's role to Satan, or imputing Satan's role to Jesus Christ) is a blatant insult to Jesus Christ.

Either I am seriously wrong, or the Church of the Great God is seriously wrong. We cannot both be true servants of God at the same time, with such contradictory positions regarding a function of Jesus Christ. I say this because I am fully aware of the profound consequences it will have for my future potential destiny, if I am on the wrong side of this issue. If my position here is wrong before God, then I am in extremely serious danger.

So I approach this question with a very sober, albeit confident outlook.

I also understand that, as far as this question is concerned, most Church of God people will fall into one of three groups:

Group #1 are those who are convinced that the Azazel goat represents Satan. For them this position is non-negotiable.

Group #2 are those who are convinced that the Azazel goat represents Jesus Christ. For them this position is equally non-negotiable. This group is currently in the minority.

Group #3 are those who may currently believe that the Azazel goat represents Satan, but who are open to the possibility that the other position may be correct. They are open to the possibility of changing their view, if they feel that there is valid proof for the other position.

I understand that the information I will present in this article is not going to change the views of people in Group #2. Thus my main motivation in writing this article is to resolutely confront and reject **a heretical teaching that is seeking to make inroads amongst the people of God**. In that way I can provide help and understanding to the people in Group #1 and in Group #3.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CRITERION

So let's examine what the Bible teaches on this subject.

Now it doesn't matter what Mr. Armstrong taught. And it doesn't matter what anyone else may have taught. It doesn't matter what good Jews or bad Jews in the past may have taught about this subject. Initially the history of this teaching is totally inconsequential. And I personally don't believe that the Azazel goat represents Satan simply because Mr. Armstrong or anyone else has taught that.

I believe that the Azazel goat represents Satan because I can prove this to be the case from the Bible itself!

The foundation for my beliefs and the things I teach has always been the Bible! Once we have been able to establish a specific teaching from the Bible, **then** history and all kinds of opinions and past ideas and teachings can be introduced as "supplementary information".

Now if we are dealing with **mistranslations** or with deviously **altered text**, then such "supplementary information" may need to be examined up-front, in order to establish the correct text. But **when the actual Hebrew text** (OT) or Greek text (NT) **is not an issue**, then we really need to first examine what the Bible tells us about our subject, before we consider any extraneous material.

In this type of situation it is in fact a distraction to **first** look at the history of a certain teaching ... who believed what and when about "Azazel". First we need to examine the biblical text at face value to establish the intended meaning ... and then, if we are so inclined, we can perhaps see who in the past agreed with the intended meaning, and who in the past disagreed with the intended meaning.

And obviously, **who believed what in the past has no bearing on the actual meaning of any verse or passage in the Bible**. The verse or passage in question itself is the ultimate guide regarding the intended meaning.

With the Azazel goat issue: we are not dealing with unknown mistranslations, and the Hebrew text is not an issue of contention. The "known mistranslation" in these verses is that the Hebrew word "azazel" has

been mistranslated as "scapegoat". But all parties involved are aware of this known mistranslation. So it is something that can easily be resolved. And the matter of falsely identifying the Azazel goat with Jesus Christ is not due to any specific technicalities for certain Hebrew words.

So from the start we can focus on the most important criterion with this question. We can start with focusing on what God Himself tells us in the Bible about this Azazel goat, without appeals to what some people believed in the past. After that we will then look at some of the "supplementary information".

THE BASIC SCRIPTURES

Never mind who may have taught what in the past, here is what the Bible tells us.

And he (Aaron) 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. (Leviticus 16:5)

Now Leviticus chapter 4 defines very specifically how "sin offerings" were to be brought. The most important component for any "sin offering" was that **the animal had to be killed**. If the animal in question is not killed, if no blood is shed, then no sin offering had been brought. Without the shedding of blood there can be no sin offering. As Paul told the Hebrews: "**without shedding of blood is no remission** (of sins)" (see Hebrews 9:22).

That is an absolutely basic point. Read the instructions in chapter 4.

Now in Leviticus 16 we will see that **only one of those two goats is killed** in sacrifice. Therefore only one of those two goats is in fact "a sin offering".

So the question is: why does verse 5 say "**two** kids of the goats for **a** sin offering", when only one of them is going to be killed? The answer here should be obvious. Note that the two goats are not for "two" sin offerings. They are for "a" sin offering, meaning **one** sin offering. That is what the Hebrew text says.

The instruction was "bring **two** goats for **one** sin offering" because God was still going to choose one of the two goats. In verse 5 either goat could **potentially** have become the sin offering. So the next step in this process was to select which goat would become the sin offering. God instructed that this was to be done by "casting lots".

And he (Aaron) shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall **cast lots** upon the two goats; one lot **for** the LORD, and the other lot **for** the scapegoat (Hebrew = azazel). (Leviticus 16:7-8)

Okay, **everybody in God's Church knows that "scapegoat" is a serious mistranslation**. We've all known that for over half a century. So let's correct this by leaving the relevant Hebrew word untranslated. We'll do the same with subsequent verses. That is also the way these verses are translated in the Jewish Publication Society Translation (JPS), and in many foreign language translations. JPS presents the Hebrew word that is used here as the name "Azazel".

So here are these two verses again, but corrected.

And he (Aaron) shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot **for the LORD**, and the other lot **for Azazel**. (Leviticus 16:7-8, see also JPS and translations into most European languages)

So what do these two verses tell us?

"The LORD" is Jesus Christ. That should be obvious. So is the one goat called "the LORD"? No, of course not! And is the other goat called "Azazel"? No, of course not! Notice that one goat is "**for**" the Lord, and that the other goat is "**for**" Azazel.

Why did God require Aaron to cast lots? Do you know?

The reason for "casting lots" is to divinely determine which goat should represent which individual. The two goats will look very similar, but they are going to represent **two vastly different individuals**. And only one of those two goats will become a sin offering. Therefore only God can divinely determine which goat should represent which individual. Therefore lots had to be cast.

Now can you see that the expression "one lot for the LORD" means that one lot is cast for **a very specific individual**? "The LORD" is a very specific and unique individual. It is not some nameless, unidentified being or person. It is a specific person ... "the LORD". **Can you see that?**

[Comment: This expression "the LORD" we also commonly translate as "the Eternal".]

The only logical conclusion is that therefore the Hebrew word "azazel" must refer to another very specific individual, who is different from "the LORD"!

"Azazel" cannot refer to "a truckload of bananas" or to any other collection of goods or things. Azazel absolutely and unconditionally has to also refer to **a very specific individual**. Can you see that?

So the inescapable conclusion is that these two goats are divinely assigned to represent **two different individuals**!

It is absolutely, totally and completely absurd to claim that the two individuals identified as "the LORD" and as "Azazel" somehow both represent the one individual named Jesus Christ. If both goats represented the same individual, then **there would be no point whatsoever for "casting lots"!**

The purpose for casting lots is not to decide what responsibilities will be put upon each goat. The purpose for casting lots is to determine which goat must represent "the LORD" and which goat must represent "Azazel". The responsibilities then follow automatically based on which individual is being represented.

It is ridiculous to claim that you need lots so that one goat can **represent Jesus Christ** in His capacity as "the LORD", and the other goat can **also represent Jesus Christ**, but in a different capacity. That assertion is absurd!

Clearly both goats are to represent one individual each. One goat is "**for the LORD**" and the other goat is "**for Azazel**". That is exactly what the Bible tells us. "The LORD" and "Azazel" are not names for the goats! Those words identify who these two goats are to represent. But the goats themselves are not to be called either "the LORD" or "Azazel".

It makes no sense to assert that **in the one and same context**, and **at the same point in time**, when God reveals two distinct individuals to us, that somehow those two distinct individuals ("the LORD" and "Azazel") are really one and the same person.

That is absurd!

Leviticus 16:8 demands the existence of two distinct individuals!

Before we look at the next few verses we need to first identify what God is telling us with the name "Azazel". It is obviously intended **to identify some specific and unique individual**. And yes, it is indeed "a name"! To claim otherwise defies logic!

Look, God calls Satan by a whole bunch of different names, because each of those "names" has a very specific meaning. If someone wants to quibble, we could also say that God has **a whole bunch of designations** for Satan. God calls individuals what they are! And when with God one individual has a lot of "designations" or "names", then that means that each "designation" or "name" will reveal very specific traits about that individual.

Thus God refers to Satan as: **Satan** (meaning "adversary"), and **Devil** (meaning "slanderer, false accuser"), and **Destroyer** (meaning one who "corrupts and destroys"), and **Heylel** (meaning "arrogant boaster"), and **Enemy** (meaning one who is "odious and hated"), and **an Evil Spirit** (meaning is obvious), and **a Serpent** (meaning "one who poisons human minds"), and **a Murderer** (meaning one who destroys lives), and **Belial** (meaning "wicked and worthless"), and **Tempter** (meaning is obvious), and **Great Red Dragon** (meaning "a serpent on steroids"), and **Beelzebub** or **Baalzebub** (meaning "lord of flies", i.e. one who brings diseases), and **god of this world** (meaning "one who controls carnal humanity"), and **prince of the power of the air** (meaning "one who can reach our minds directly, through the air as it were"), and **prince of this world** (meaning "the ruler of this present age"), and **Apollyon** (meaning "one who is destined to be driven away"), and **Abaddon** (same meaning as Apollyon), and **Wandering Star** (meaning "one who leads people astray"), and **Father of Liars** (meaning is obvious), and **Accuser of our Brethren** (meaning "one who levels false accusations against us").

With the above **20 different ways** of identifying Satan, is it really a surprise if God used **one more way** to identify Satan? Number 21 for the above list is "**Azazel**". A name identifies an individual! And the word "Azazel" identifies in one more way the being we most commonly refer to as "Satan". This name "Azazel" focuses on Satan's character and his ultimate destiny.

If you want to argue about "Azazel" applying to Satan, how many of the above 20 other designations for Satan do you also want to dismiss? None?? Why?? Why do you dismiss "Azazel" as referring to Satan, when you freely accept all of the above 20 designations for Satan? Are you selective in what you accept and what you argue against?

<u>THE NAME AZAZEL</u>

Let's look at the Hebrew word "Azazel":

There is a considerable amount of confusion over the origin of this name. Some say that the meaning is dubious. Some authorities provide a range of possible meanings. So while I will present a correct possibility for the root meaning of this name, which possibility I believe is the meaning God intended for us to understand, you will find those who disagree with the meaning I will present.

Now I don't claim to be an authority on ancient Hebrew. I am not an authority. So let me explain why I believe the meaning I present is the one God intended.

First of all, the goat for Azazel is not a sacrifice, because it is never killed. We don't need to understand Hebrew to establish this fact. But if this goat is not a sacrifice, then it rules out the possibility of this goat representing Jesus Christ. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that this goat is presented as a contrast to the goat that is "for" Jesus Christ. This point, that the goat for Azazel cannot possibly

represent Jesus Christ, is proved conclusively in the following 20+ pages of this article.

So **with Jesus Christ ruled out** as a possible identity for this particular goat, the options for an individual who will carry away all sins on his head have been reduced to only one possible candidate ... Satan. Azazel cannot possibly refer to any mortal human being. Neither can it refer to any of the righteous holy angels of God. The only option is that Azazel refers to an evil spirit who bears responsibility for all human sins. And Satan is the only evil spirit who is identified in the Bible. Satan is the leader of all the evil spirits.

Now identifying Azazel with Satan **does not depend on** the meaning of the name Azazel. Even without knowing the correct meaning of the name Azazel, it is quite clear that Azazel refers to Satan. Knowing the meaning of the name Azazel simply reinforces that conclusion.

So in considering the different meanings scholars have provided for the root words from which the name Azazel is formed, I have selected those meanings that clearly apply to Satan. I have rejected other meanings that have been put forward as possibilities.

Many Hebrew words can be used in both good and bad applications. For example, the Hebrew word "halal" is used in positive contexts to mean "praise" and "glory", and it is also used in negative contexts to mean "mad" and "foolish" and "boasting". See my 1999 article "Satan's Great Deception" for a detailed discussion of this word "halal".

With the 165 references to "halal" in the Old Testament we cannot simply look at a Hebrew-English dictionary to assign a meaning to the word "halal". We absolutely have to first of all consider the context in which "halal" is used. We absolutely first have to establish whether the word "halal" refers to God or whether it refers to Satan. That evaluation will determine which meaning is intended.

That is a process we always need to apply when we seek to establish the intended meaning of any Hebrew word in the Old Testament. We have to first ask: to whom does this Hebrew word apply in this particular context?

That is what I have done in establishing the God-intended meaning for the name Azazel. **For whom this name is used** by God is the most important criterion in establishing the God-intended meaning for this name. God never at any time has said anything complimentary about Satan ... never! I have just given you 20 different derogatory names/descriptions that God has used for Satan. [The name "lucifer" (Isaiah 14:12) is a very perverse mistranslation of the Hebrew name "heylel", as I explain in the above-mentioned article.]

So I work from the premise that if a Hebrew word which God uses for Satan has both good and bad meanings, then **it is always the bad meaning that God intends when God uses that word for Satan**. There is no other option. So in selecting the possible meanings for the root words for the name Azazel, this is the process I have followed.

Let's understand that **God hates Satan**!

So now let's look at the meaning of Azazel.

AZAZEL IS NOT A NICE NAME!

Let's recognize something that David Grabbe seems to have overlooked. And that is this: for anyone to

be called "Azazel" is not a nice name at all. That name "Azazel" is really a very derogatory name, an offensive name.

Azazel is a composite word formed from parts of two other Hebrew words. Those two words are:

- "**az**", which in turn is derived from "**azaz**", meaning: **strong, hard, obstinate**; etc.

- "**azal**" meaning: **to go away**, **to disappear**, **to depart**.

The **first part** of this name refers to the individual's **character**, and the **second part** of this name refers to the **penalty** from God that this individual is to receive. Both parts of this name are important. And no translators have ever translated the first part of this name, not into English, and not into any other language. At best they have translated only the second part of this name, thereby creating a flawed picture for Azazel.

"Receiving a penalty from God" doesn't really fit Jesus Christ, does it? But it fits Satan perfectly. Consider this: here is a name that incorporates a very specific penalty from God that is to be applied to Azazel.

This word "Azazel" is only used four times in three verses in the Old Testament, all three verses being in Leviticus 16. Putting the meanings of the words from which "azazel" is derived together, we get the following meaning:

Azazel means: the strong and obstinate one (who is destined) to go away and disappear.

"The strong and obstinate one" refers to **the bad character**. "Who is destined to go away and disappear" refers to **the penalty** for that bad character. These are the two components of the name "Azazel".

So the Church of the Great God claims that a name which means "the strong and obstinate one who is destined to go away and disappear" supposedly applies to Jesus Christ.

Does that really make sense? **Will Jesus Christ really disappear?**

Keep in mind that the goat for Azazel does not represent sins! That goat represents **an individual** who carries away those sins. And the name Azazel applies to a very specific individual, and not to a goat. Now sins don't exist in a vacuum. Sins only exist in the presence of specific individuals. Sins can't go away on their own. Only individuals can go away, and then take sins with them.

To apply the name Azazel to Jesus Christ is an enormous insult to Jesus Christ. **That name implies that Jesus Christ has a rebellious, stubborn and selfish character.** Is that what you believe?

Let me put this very plainly:

Would you ever dare to call Jesus Christ "**a liar**"? What about calling Jesus Christ "**a deceiver**" or "**a destroyer**" or "**a son of Belial**" or "**a murderer**" or "**a serpent**"? Would you ever dare to use one of these terms to refer to Jesus Christ? No, of course you wouldn't. However, let's hypothetically suppose that someone with a background in God's Church was actually rebellious enough or stupid enough or bitter enough to apply one of these terms to Jesus Christ ... what do you think would happen to that person? Why, someone like that would be signing his own death warrant for the second death, right? We cannot offend Jesus Christ like that without losing **the privilege** to live.

What about calling Jesus Christ "**a hard man**"? Would you do that? Do you know what the penalty for that is? Calling Jesus Christ by this expression makes the person "a wicked servant" (Matthew 25:26). And the penalty for even this form of address is the second death (see Matthew 25:30).

Yes, we wouldn't dare to ever call Jesus Christ by one of these English language names. Their meanings are easy to understand. But a name in a strange language (i.e. Hebrew)? Well, we might use a derogatory name from the Hebrew language, **provided someone is able to deceive us** into believing that the strange name is a good and honorable term, you know, something like the word "scapegoat".

Here is what everybody needs to understand:

It was Jesus Christ who in Leviticus 16 gave Satan the name Azazel. **And for anyone with any kind of Church of God background to apply the name Azazel to Jesus Christ is exactly the same as calling Jesus Christ a liar and a deceiver and a serpent and a son of Belial!**

If you apply **one** of Satan's names or identifying tags to Jesus Christ, that is the same as applying **all** of Satan's identifying attributes to Jesus Christ. That's the principle of James 2:10. So before you again apply the name Azazel to Jesus Christ, just be clear in your own mind that **you will in effect also be calling Jesus Christ all of Satan's 20 other names** that we looked at earlier.

You have been warned!

Let's continue:

If that second goat was really intended to represent Jesus Christ in some way, then God would never in a trillion years have used the word "azazel" to refer to Jesus Christ! **That name is so offensive!**

That goat would with absolute certainty have been "for" a name other than "Azazel". Azazel is clearly **a very derogatory term**, something that is completely obscured by the gross mistranslation "scapegoat". Today "scapegoat" is in fact something of a noble term, referring to an innocent person taking the blame for other people's transgressions. And so "scapegoat" obscures very effectively just how insulting and derogatory a term "Azazel" actually is. More on this shortly.

In actual fact this derogatory name "Azazel" ties in perfectly with other very derogatory names, you know, like Murderer, Liar, Adversary, Destroyer, Belial, Tempter, Serpent, etc. Azazel obviously belongs to **that same genre** of names. As with all these other names, the name Azazel also implies major character flaws.

Never in a trillion years would God use such a derogatory name for Jesus Christ. To apply the name Azazel to Jesus Christ is just as perverse as applying the name Lucifer to Satan ... i.e. make Satan look good (Lucifer) and make Jesus Christ look bad (Azazel). Who could possibly be behind such a perverse plot?

Yes, Jesus Christ would suffer for our sins. And yes, He was "despised and rejected" (see Isaiah 53:3). And yes, the Pharisees may have falsely accused Jesus Christ of being "gluttonous and a winebibber" (see Matthew 11:19). But no bad names, **names that imply character flaws**, are ever used for Jesus Christ. It is absolutely offensive to refer to a member of the God Family with a name that inherently implies huge character flaws, a name like "Azazel". That simply cannot be!

Can you, who want to associate the name Azazel with Jesus Christ, not see that?

It is impossible for the name (or designation) Azazel to refer to Jesus Christ, the Creator of this physical

universe. That name Azazel is so offensive for any member of the God Family. This point is something that never crossed David Grabbe's mind, when he wrote his articles. I wonder why this never occurred to him, when the name Azazel is really **so obviously derogatory**?

The next thing to consider:

If both goats were really going to represent the same one individual (i.e. Jesus Christ), what's the point in once identifying Jesus Christ unambiguously (i.e. "the LORD") and once with some questionable codename (i.e. "Azazel")? Why not be unambiguous both times? Why use the codename "Azazel" in one place for Jesus Christ?

Furthermore, consider the following. With one goat "for the LORD" and one goat "for Azazel", if Azazel supposedly refers to "the scapegoat", we have the following situation:

The expression "the Lord" identifies a very specific Being, the second member of the God Family. But if Azazel is supposed to refer to "the scapegoat", then the second goat doesn't identify any specific being at all ... **it only identifies "a goat"**! That's like comparing apples with onions. So on one side of this equation we have **Jesus Christ** (i.e. "the LORD"), and on the other side of this equation we have **a goat** (i.e. "the scapegoat"). What kind of weird comparison is that?

Then we are required **to infer** that "the scapegoat" refers to Jesus Christ. So then we have to find Scriptures that supposedly imply that scapegoat "could" apply to Jesus Christ ... because the correct meaning of the name Azazel (i.e. the strong and obstinate one who is destined to go away and disappear) can with absolute certainty **not** be applied to Jesus Christ. So (supposedly) lots have to be cast between "the LORD" and "a goat", or "a scapegoat" as some would claim! That is an insult to Jesus Christ!

Understand also one other point: irrespective of whether or not people openly acknowledge that "scapegoat" is a mistranslation, proponents of "Azazel = Jesus Christ" must reason from the premise that "scapegoat" is more or less the correct meaning for Azazel. **They must reason from Azazel supposedly referring to "an innocent victim"**, someone who didn't do it, but who takes the blame for what others have done. That line of reasoning is unavoidable if Azazel supposedly refers to Jesus Christ, since Jesus Christ is obviously sinless (see Hebrews 4:15).

So the Azazel = Jesus Christ heresy has to be built on **the premise** that "Azazel" means something like "scapegoat". If that is not correct (and it isn't!!), then **this also causes this heresy to collapse**. Claiming that Azazel = Jesus Christ absolutely requires a scapegoat identity for Azazel. But even a simple examination of the word Azazel shows that this word cannot possibly refer to some "innocent victim for other people's transgressions". That is the status of the first goat, the one for "the LORD"; **that** is the goat that is the innocent victim for other people's transgressions. Shortly we'll examine the origin for the term "scapegoat".

When you think this through to its logical conclusion, then this point also demolishes the claim that Azazel supposedly refers to Jesus Christ.

Please note! Thus far I have not appealed to what anyone else may have taught in the past. Thus far I have relied exclusively on what Leviticus 16 tells us. Whether Mr. Armstrong or ancient Jews may have believed the same as I do, is immaterial to me. I have only looked at the verses under consideration thus far. And these are the unavoidable conclusions I am forced to draw from those verses.

With the correct identity for "Azazel" established, this might now be a good place to examine how we actually ended up with the mistranslation "scapegoat" in our English translations.

THE ORIGIN OF "SCAPEGOAT"

Let's start with our English word "scapegoat". Here is the entry for "scapegoat" in the Unabridged 2nd Edition of Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary:

"**scapegoat**: 1. a goat over the head of which the high priest of the ancient Jews confessed the sins of the people on the Day of Atonement, after which **it was allowed to escape**; 2. a person, group, or thing that **bears the blame for the mistakes or crimes of others** or for some misfortune due to another agency." (page 1616, my emphasis)

So the English word "scapegoat" means "escape goat", i.e. "**the goat that was allowed to escape**". And according to Webster's the "scapegoat" is **always an innocent victim** for the penalties incurred by someone else.

When compared to the Hebrew word "Azazel" then **Webster's is wrong on both counts**!

First of all, **this goat is not at all "allowed to escape"**! That idea is totally false! For the goat for Azazel there is no escape at all! The goat does not "escape". No, **the goat is condemned** to permanent isolation. The permanent and irreversible banishment into a desolate wilderness is a very severe punishment, not an escape. It is a life sentence!

However, the English word "scapegoat", which is only short for "**escape goat**", does illustrate the understanding that this goat is **not** a sacrifice. This goat "escapes" from being sacrificed. That is what the English name for this goat refers to.

Secondly, Azazel does not bear "the blame for the mistakes or crimes of others". **Azazel bears the full blame for his own part** in all the sins and crimes of all human beings. Azazel himself bears the greatest part of the responsibility for the sins committed by all human beings. And that is why the sins are heaped on his head. **Azazel rightfully deserves all the guilt** that is placed on his head. All those sins really belong to Azazel. Satan is most assuredly not "an innocent scapegoat".

As an analogy:

A rich man (Satan) hires a hit-man (that's us, you and me, all human beings) to kill an enemy (i.e. to commit sins). The hit-man is guilty, no question about it. But the rich man is **even more guilty**, because he initiated the whole crime. And even if the hit-man is forgiven for what he did, then the rich man's guilt still remains. And that guilt is placed on Azazel's own head. **He fully deserves all the guilt placed upon him.**

We might also note that the same Webster's Dictionary also has an entry for "Azazel". That entry reads as follows:

"**Azazel**: noun [Heb. azazel, lit. removal] in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, one of the angels **who rebelled with Satan**." (page 133, my emphasis)

Obviously Milton's poem "Paradise Lost" presents a totally perverse picture for what actually happened back in Genesis. However, note that the editors of Webster's did correctly understand that **the second part of the name Azazel** literally refers to "**removal**". This meaning they did not get from John Milton; this meaning they got from the Hebrew. It is an individual who is "removed", and who takes all sins with him.

Okay, so much for the meaning of the **English word "scapegoat"**. But how did we get from the Hebrew word "Azazel" to this English word "scapegoat"?

THERE ARE NO CORRECT TRANSLATIONS OF AZAZEL

Here is a basic point we need to understand.

The Hebrew word "Azazel" has not been translated correctly into any other language!

"Azazel" has never in any translation of the OT been translated correctly!

Not into Greek or Latin or English or French or German or Spanish or Italian or Dutch or Portuguese or Afrikaans or the English/Yiddish language Orthodox Jewish Bible (I have checked translations into all these languages), or into any other language. In most cases the modern translations into those languages (i.e. for the moment ignoring Greek and Latin) have left the Hebrew word "Azazel" untranslated, like they have left all other names mentioned in the Old Testament untranslated. They recognized Azazel as a name, and accepted it as such into their respective translations. And that is perfectly acceptable. But had they attempted to translate the meaning of the word azazel, they would have come up with an incorrect translation.

An exception to the above approach is a translation into Dutch. There the word Azazel has been translated as "den weggaanden bok", which means "the goat that is going away". This is obviously not the literal meaning of the Hebrew word "Azazel"; it is nothing more than an interpretation of **one aspect** of what happens to that particular goat.

First of all, in Leviticus 16 God really did use Azazel as a name for a specific individual. And so it is very appropriate for all these translations into these different languages to leave the name Azazel untranslated. But at the same time that name has a very revealing meaning.

Secondly, those translations that have attempted to translate the word "Azazel" into their respective languages (i.e. English and Dutch) have come up with incorrect and misleading translations. "Scapegoat" is an extremely misleading translation, and even the Dutch "den weggaanden bok" is still misleading, because **it ignores the rebellious attitude** conveyed by the first part of the Hebrew name Azazel.

So those translations that accepted Azazel as a name got that right, but without conveying any meaning for this name. Their readers were left in the dark as far as what God is telling us with the name Azazel is concerned. And those translations that have attempted to translate the meaning of the word Azazel got it wrong, and in the process they misled their readers.

The point here is this:

Unless translators actually understand correctly what God is showing us with this Day of Atonement ritual, they will be incapable of translating the word "Azazel" correctly. Understanding must always be the foundation for correct translations. And since no translators have ever really understood correctly the whole picture for this Azazel goat ritual, therefore they are not in a position to put the whole picture together correctly. And therefore they cannot translate "Azazel" correctly.

Oh, some may seem to get close, but the whole picture will always elude them. They will always miss the most important point that God was revealing with this name Azazel. That point I will discuss in the

next section.

So let’s now look at how this Hebrew name "Azazel" was translated into Greek and into Latin.

AZAZEL IN GREEK AND LATIN TRANSLATIONS

The OT Hebrew was first translated into Greek in the LXX translation. But the LXX translator only understood the second part of the name Azazel. Here is what we have in the LXX for Leviticus 16, verses 8 and 10.

The Hebrew word "**Azazel**" is translated into ancient Greek as "**apopompaios**". This Greek word is formed from "**apo**" + "**pompaios**".

"Apo" is a preposition that means: "**from**", or "**away from**".

"Pompaios" refers to: "**escorting**, **conducting**", as per the Liddell and Scott Greek Lexicon.

So the whole word "apopompaios" literally means: "**to escort away from**". In Liddell and Scott this Greek word is assigned the meaning "**carrying away evil**". In the Interlinear LXX this Greek word is mistranslated into English as "scapegoat". It should be obvious that "apopompaios" does not mean "scapegoat". So "scapegoat" is an incorrect interpretation, and not a translation of the Greek word at all.

Where the English text of Leviticus 16:10 reads: "the goat on which the lot fell **for Azazel** ...", the Greek LXX text, translated into English, reads: "the young he-goat upon which came the lot **to be escorted away from** ...".

To recall:

Hebrew "Azazel" means: "the strong and obstinate one (azaz) who is destined to go away and disappear" (azal). This word was formed from the two Hebrew words "azaz" + "azal".

Greek "apopompaios" means: "to be escorted away from". This word "apopompaios" was formed from the two Greek words "apo" + "pompaios". The whole Greek word represents the meaning of the Hebrew word "azal".

So in the Greek LXX translation instead of retaining the Hebrew name Azazel, they instead translated **half of the meaning** of that name into Greek. The meaning of the first half of Azazel was quietly dropped. The meaning of "azaz" was dropped.

Most scholars have not understood the problem with even the Liddell and Scott translation "carrying away evil". That rendering is really no better than "scapegoat". Here is the problem in its most basic form:

"**Azazel**" focuses on **what the individual is like**. He is a strong rebel with an ungodly attitude, who is sentenced by God to spend all future eternity in "a desolate wilderness".

The mistranslations "**scapegoat**" and "**carrying away evil**" ignore what the individual is like! Instead they focus on **what he does**. But a focus on what he does reveals nothing about his filthy rotten rebellious character. But **that evil character** is precisely what the first component of the name Azazel (i.e. azaz) reveals.

Someone who is "a scapegoat", someone who "carries away evil" could in fact be a very nice individual, doing something for the benefit of others. How noble!

Can you see the perverse deception that is involved in that very first mistranslation (i.e. apopompaios) of the name Azazel?

The Hebrew name Azazel does not in any way focus on what the individual actually does! The rest of the story in Leviticus 16 tells us what he does, or rather what is done to him. But the name Azazel itself does not reveal anything about what that goat is going to do. **In Hebrew the name Azazel only tells us what the individual is like**, and what his personal penalty is going to be.

Put another way: the name tells us what the individual is like, what his character is like. What the individual does, or what is done to him, spells out **the penalty that is imposed on him**. The mistranslations obscure the fact that "what he does" is a penalty for his evil character, in leading humanity into sinning. That is why all sins are placed on his head, because of his evil character. He himself as an individual is banished forever, and he takes all sins with him.

So to summarize this part:

The first translation of the Hebrew name Azazel switched the focus away from what the individual is like, and onto what he does or what is done to him. **What he is like as an individual has in the translation been conveniently removed from his name.**

From then onwards the name Azazel has always been viewed as expressing some aspect of what the individual does, or what is done to him. The focus on what he is, the focus on his character, has been completely erased from any connection with the name Azazel.

Now while in many different languages the Hebrew name Azazel has been retained untranslated, **the actual meaning of that name has been totally obscured**. So in various languages you may read the name Azazel in the text of Leviticus 16, but if pressed for the actual meaning, the native speakers of those languages will tell you (if they know anything at all) that it supposedly means something like "scapegoat" or "one who carries away sins" or "one who is sent away", etc.

Unless people actually know the correct meaning of the name Azazel, they might as well have "scapegoat" or one of the other mistranslations in their particular translations.

By itself there is no value to having the name Azazel in our translations. The only thing of value is if we correctly understand the information about the character of the individual identified as Azazel, which information God is revealing to us through that name. It is the meaning God has attached to that name, that is important. The correct phonetic sound of that name has no value on its own.

The translation of Azazel into Greek for the LXX translation is the origin for all the confusion about the name Azazel. From the time of the LXX onwards all bad character implications have been totally removed from the Hebrew name Azazel.

Let’s move on to the translation into Latin, the Latin Vulgate.

In the Latin Vulgate for Leviticus 16, the Hebrew Azazel has been translated as "**capro emissario**" and "**caprum emissarium**".

The Latin word "caper, capri" means "**a he-goat**". (Think of the Romans calling the Isle of Capri "Goat Island".)

The Latin word "emissarius, emissari" means "**scout, agent, emissary**".

The Latin thus presents additional mistranslations.

No part of the name "Azazel" means "goat". Yet with the Latin Vulgate the word "he-goat" has now become a part of the supposed meaning of Azazel. The identity of Azazel has been switched from an evil spirit being to the goat that represents that evil spirit being. This has paved the way for later mistranslating Azazel into English as "scapegoat".

Next, the goat for Azazel is **not** a scout, agent or emissary for anyone, especially not for God! But the Latin word "emissarius" implied something good or noble. The bad character attributes inherent in the name Azazel have been totally obliterated in this Latin mistranslation. The focus is again directed towards what the goat does, rather than what he is, in the process trying to turn what he does into something noble.

No part of the Hebrew word Azazel means goat or scout or agent or emissary. So we have a 100% mistranslation into Latin.

Then along came John Wycliffe, and he translated the Bible into English from the Latin Vulgate. Wycliffe didn't know Hebrew or Greek. He only read the Latin text. So it should not surprise us that Wycliffe translated Leviticus 16:8 as "**the goot that schal be sent out**" (i.e. "the goat that shall be sent out"). That is a literal translation of the Latin text "capro emissario".

This first mistranslation into English by Wycliffe solidified the word "goat" as a part of the meaning of Azazel. From Wycliffe it was a small step to change from "the goat that shall be sent out" to "**the goat that escaped**", or "the escaped goat", or for short "**the scapegoat**". So our translation "scapegoat" goes back to Wycliffe and to the Latin Vulgate for the "goat" part, and it goes back to the Greek LXX for the "escape" part (escorting away). The Greek LXX in turn was responsible for erasing all bad character implications inherent in the name Azazel.

Now let's consider what is probably the most vital matter in this attempt to identify the goat for Azazel with Jesus Christ. And this does not involve the meaning of the word Azazel.

THE AZAZEL GOAT IS NOT A SACRIFICE

I have already introduced this point. But it is vital to this discussion. So let's examine this point more closely. On the Church of the Great God website I found the following quotation about the Azazel articles:

"David Grabbe focuses on **the inappropriateness of Satan as a sacrifice** ..."

What utter garbage is this?

In no way, shape or form does Leviticus 16 say that the Azazel goat "is a sacrifice"! They obviously don't understand that verse 5 only makes provision for choosing one goat from amongst two, for **one** sin offering. Do they actually know what constitutes "a sacrifice"? Here is the relevant verse for the one goat that has been selected to be sacrificed for the one sin offering.

And Aaron shall bring **the goat upon which the LORD'S lot fell**, and offer him *for* a sin offering. (Leviticus 16:9)

Do you know what constitutes "a sacrifice"? If a goat is "sacrificed", then that goat is **killed**! And if a goat is not killed, then that goat is not "a sacrifice". **Is that so difficult to understand?**

The only one of the two goats that is "sacrificed" is the one "upon which the LORD'S lot fell". That's what verse 9 tells us. **The other goat is never killed!** Therefore in no way can the other goat be called "a sacrifice".

The claim that the goat for Azazel is "a sacrifice for sin" is **a huge, glaring, gigantic flaw in the foundation** of David Grabbe's reasoning. And he has built his whole argument on this false assumption. So with the exposure of this flaw his whole argument comes crashing down like a house of cards. **This simple fact**, that a goat which is not killed is obviously not a sacrifice, **also demolishes the foundational premise for the whole blasphemous teaching** that the goat for Azazel supposedly represents Jesus Christ!

For those of you out there who have urged me to accept David Grabbe's wonderfully reasoned-out presentation: how is it that you yourself couldn't see this glaring flaw in his arguments? Are you just going to gloss over this foundational flaw, and **pretend that it doesn't matter**? This mistake, all by itself, totally destroys David Grabbe's arguments.

Look, nowhere does the Bible teach that the goat for Azazel "is sacrificed". All the arguments built on that flawed premise are nothing but strawmen, to be conveniently knocked down. Oh yes, you can wax eloquent about the inappropriateness of Satan being a sacrifice for sins. But you quietly overlook the fact that the goat for Azazel is not a sacrifice at all.

Let's continue with the biblical account.

But the goat, on which the lot fell for Azazel, shall be presented **alive** before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, *and* to **let him go for Azazel** into the wilderness. (Leviticus 16:10)

Do you know what the word "alive" means? Do you know what "let him go for Azazel into the wilderness" means? **It means that this goat is not sacrificed!** Is that difficult to understand? And it is Azazel who is banished into "the wilderness".

Since all goats are mortal, this goat for Azazel would obviously die at some point, just like every other goat on earth will die at some point. But **the implied symbolism** in the goat's release is that the goat's existence is not terminated by human action. And **no human being is going to be responsible for the death of that goat**. The symbolism here is that the goat wanders around aimlessly, because there is nothing to do in the wilderness.

"Wandering aimlessly in a wilderness" is such an obvious parallel to Satan's destiny, that it is difficult to understand how any students of the Bible could miss this parallel? But let's consider the proposed alternative.

The goat for Azazel does not represent sin. The goat represents **an individual**, who has sins heaped upon his head. Now if the goat is supposed to represent Jesus Christ:

Is the Church of the Great God saying that **Jesus Christ is going to wander aimlessly "in the wilderness"**? For how long? Forever? The goat for Azazel never returns, even though it is not killed! **It is never again seen by anyone!** Does that fit Jesus Christ's future, or does that fit Satan's future?

The goat for Azazel is banished to a place where there is noone else. It is not "the sins" that are banished. Oh no, **it is the individual**, who is carrying those sins, **who is banished**. The individual is

banished for ever. How can anyone in their right mind possibly attempt to apply this to Jesus Christ?

THE REST OF THE STORY

Aaron brought one sin offering for himself, and then he brought the goat as a sin offering for the people. Notice:

Then shall he kill **the goat of the sin offering**, that *is* **for the people**, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: (Leviticus 16:15)

There is **only one sin offering for the people**. The goat is killed, and the blood is sprinkled before the mercy seat. So this sin offering for the people has been **accepted by God the Father**.

Now here is a question David Grabbe didn't think of.

If the Azazel goat is supposedly also a sin offering: **exactly for whom is it a sin offering?**

Are there any others, besides "the people", who **also** need to have a sin offering cover their sins? The human high priest's own sins were covered by the bullock offering, and all the people's sins are covered by the "the goat for the LORD" offering. So **whose sins is the goat for Azazel supposed to be applied to?**

If you still (theoretically) need **another sin offering** after the goat for the LORD has been killed, it must mean that **the first sin offering wasn't really good enough** to take care of all the sins that need to be forgiven. Is that what CGG is saying?

If it really requires this Azazel goat to forgive "**all the iniquities** of the children of Israel and **all their transgressions** in **all their sins**" (Leviticus 16:21), then killing the first goat had been **a totally meaningless waste of time**! The death of that goat hadn't achieved anything at all, because the sins are supposedly not forgiven until they are put on the head of the goat for Azazel.

That scenario is also highly offensive to Jesus Christ!

When one sin offering has been brought and accepted before God the Father's throne, then it is highly offensive to claim that you still need "another sin offering"! The only possible circumstances under which you might need a second sin offering is if the first sin offering wasn't good enough or complete enough. But that is an insult to the first sin offering.

Consider also: a sin offering can only be a sin offering **if it is accepted** by God the Father. If God the Father does not accept it, then it is not an acceptable sin offering. Acceptance by God the Father is represented by taking the offering "within the veil". Now **there is absolutely nothing whatsoever about the goat for Azazel that is accepted by God the Father**. Driven away into the wilderness is the opposite of acceptance! Driven away into the wilderness means that **God the Father does not want to see that individual**! And if God the Father refuses to see him, then **that cannot possibly be a sin offering**. What is the point of a sin offering that the Father refuses to accept? Think of Cain's unacceptable offering.

These things require answers. And only one of those two goats was a sin offering. But let's continue with the events that followed verse 15.

Once all the actions associated with that one sin offering had been completed, **then** Aaron was to deal with the live goat, the one that would **not** become a sin offering. Here are the instructions:

And when he has 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: (Leviticus 16:20-21)

Notice the sequence:

1) First one goat is killed as a sin offering for the people. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22 again).

2) Now it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to literally take away sins (see Hebrews 10:4). So the goat for the sin offering only symbolically removed the sins of the people. So in this Atonement Day ceremony the sins have been symbolically forgiven, when the blood of the goat for Jesus Christ was sprinkled before the mercy seat.

3) Only after that does the priest then place all those **sins that have already been forgiven** on the head of the goat for Azazel. How does that work? Do sins have to be forgiven twice? No, of course not.

Here is the key for understanding this correctly.

When the sins are placed on the head of the goat for Azazel, then that has absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with "forgiving sins"!

This has nothing at all to do with any kind of forgiveness! **Forgiveness** does not enter the picture with anything that has to do with the goat for Azazel. This part of the Atonement Day ceremony is not about forgiveness at all. And **no blood is shed** in this part of the ceremony. Therefore forgiveness of sins cannot possibly be involved in this activity with the goat for Azazel.

THE HIGH PRIEST'S ROLE AND ACTIONS

Very few people understand this correctly. Here is how it works.

1) The High Priest (Aaron) symbolically represents Jesus Christ. But mortal human priests can't really represent Jesus Christ. So the human High Priest needs to bring a major sacrifice for himself, to acknowledge this shortfall.

2) Notice that **for the whole nation** the High Priest had to bring only one **goat**. But **for himself** the High Priest had to bring one **bullock**, a more valuable animal. So God deemed it vastly more important that the High Priest himself was (symbolically) cleansed of all sins, than that the combined sins of the entire nation would be cleansed (symbolically).

3) The reason is that the High Priest was to represent Jesus Christ, who is the Creator of all human beings. So for the High Priest to represent Christ it required the sacrifice of a bullock, and to forgive the sins of the entire nation required only one goat.

4) When the High Priest took the blood of the goat "within the veil", then that represented God the Father

accepting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on behalf of **all human beings who would at some point come to repentance**.

5) So at that point all the sins of repentant human beings are forgiven. They are history. They are gone for good.

6) Then the High Priest comes out of the tabernacle. From verse 20 onwards **the High Priest represents the resurrected Jesus Christ, after the order of Melchizedek**.

7) The events that now follow with the goat for Azazel will only take place at some point **after** Jesus Christ's second coming. When the High Priest came out of the tabernacle, **that represented Jesus Christ's second coming**! Once the High Priest comes out of the tabernacle, you cannot go back to events that took place before he came out of the tabernacle ... it is too late for that! Once Jesus Christ has returned, you cannot go back to events before Christ's second coming. This means that all the events dealing with the goat for Azazel can only take place **after Jesus Christ's second coming** ... because He has at that point come out of "the tabernacle"; He has come back from having been in the presence of God the Father. The obvious symbolism for the High Priest "coming out of the tabernacle" is the second coming of Jesus Christ.

8) Only after concluding the sacrifice of the goat for "the LORD" does the High Priest deal with the goat for Azazel. At that point the repentant people no longer have any sins. Their sins were forgiven **before** the High Priest came out of the tabernacle, i.e. their sins were forgiven before Christ's second coming.

9) And **only then** does the High Priest lay his hands on the head of the goat for Azazel and place absolutely all sins, including sins which human beings have already had forgiven, on the head of that goat.

10) **This action has nothing to do with forgiveness for anyone!** It is not about forgiveness! No blood is shed in this action, and nothing here is accepted by God the Father. This is all about placing **responsibility** for all human sins on the head of this goat for Azazel. **Those sins will never be removed from the head of Azazel.** There is no mechanism for those sins to ever be taken off the head of Azazel. Therefore those sins stay on Azazel's head forever.

11) Consider that this activity involves **two individuals**: the High Priest and the goat for Azazel. The High Priest obviously represents Jesus Christ, who is our High Priest in heaven right now (Hebrews 6:20, etc.). **So it is impossible for the live goat to also represent Jesus Christ**. The two distinct individuals in this activity (i.e. the High Priest and the goat for Azazel) cannot both represent Jesus Christ at the same time. That suggestion is preposterous. Jesus Christ cannot lay hands upon Himself and thereby place sins upon His own head. And neither is that something that Jesus Christ would ever want to do ... place sins upon His own head.

12) Now there is no High Priest other than Jesus Christ.

13) **Question**: How can the High Priest, who has no sins himself (after the bullock sin offering), place all these sins on the head of the goat for Azazel? How does that work? **Where does the High Priest get all those sins** to be in a position to place them on the goat's head? Does He fish all those sins out of thin air? How does that work?

14) The High Priest can readily do this because **He has got all those sins upon Himself**! That is **the resurrected Jesus Christ** whose blood has paid for all the sins of all repentant people. When God forgave our sins, then Jesus Christ took them upon Himself. They are not His sins. They are our sins which have all already been forgiven. But they are technically still in Jesus Christ's account. And that is

why Jesus Christ can spontaneously place those sins on the head of Azazel ... they are all available at Christ's fingertips, so to speak.

15) So **at the end of the story** Jesus Christ places all the sins for which He has paid with His blood upon the head of Satan, emptying His account as it were, ... and then Satan is banished to "the blackness of darkness for ever" (see Jude 1:13). That is perfectly pictured by the goat being "sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness". No convoluted reasoning is needed to see this symbolism. It is so obvious.

Let's look at the next verse.

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. (Leviticus 16:22)

The goat itself is not sin. The goat represents a specific individual. And that individual carries all the sins away. **In this process there is no forgiveness involved!** The sins are carried away, but they are **never forgiven** for this specific individual. Those sins stay with Azazel forever.

Now God is not unjust. The reason all the sins of all repentant human beings are placed on this individual's head is because **this individual bears a major responsibility for all those sins** having been committed. That individual has been a major "accessory to all human sins and crimes". It is for that reason that all these sins are placed on his head.

This is the correct symbolism, and it certainly doesn't fit Jesus Christ. It only fits Satan.

Consider further: there is no way for the goat himself to shake those sins off his head! **There is no way for all the sins to ever be taken off the head of "Azazel"**. The Church of the Great God didn't think of that, did they?

Now if the goat for Azazel supposedly represents Jesus Christ, how could Jesus Christ ever get all those sins off His head? Does he dump them somewhere? How? **Does He come back clean and free of all the sins that were heaped on His head?** What did He do with them? Where did He leave all those sins? Or is Jesus Christ going to carry all those sins on His head for future eternity?

Can you not see the absurdity of claiming that the goat for Azazel represents Jesus Christ?

And that is all the Bible tells us about the goat for Azazel, except for a concluding comment in verse 26.

And **he that let go the goat for Azazel** shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward come into the camp. (Leviticus 16:26)

So is the Church of the Great God saying that the angel who (supposedly!) led Jesus Christ out into the wilderness **has become polluted by contact with Jesus Christ**, and the angel must therefore go through a process of de-contamination? Can you not see how perverse this reasoning is ... that Jesus Christ would **ever** be led anywhere by some angel?? That thought is utterly depraved!

Let's be quite clear here.

This "fit man" doesn't need to wash because of what was heaped upon the head of the goat for Azazel. That's not it at all! This "fit man" has to wash because he has come into contact with the goat that represents Azazel, whether or not sins have been heaped upon the goat's head! **Any contact with Azazel requires a process of de-contamination. This is true even before any sins are formally**

heaped on Azazel's head!

Azazel represents a perverse, lying, devious, hypocritical, murderous, odious and hateful personality that will have **a perverse effect** on anyone with whom this mind comes into contact. That's true even before all sins are formally heaped on his head, as witnessed by the one third of all the angels whom he led in rebellion against God. None of that one third of all the angels had the benefit of going through a thorough de-contamination process after their initial contact with that perverse personality. Look at what it did to them. They were all contaminated by contact with Satan, and now all of them are demons.

Can you grasp **the extreme insult** implied in claiming that the angel who supposedly led Jesus Christ into the wilderness (i.e. if the goat for Azazel really represents Jesus Christ) has to go through a de-contamination process before rejoining all the other angels? Does the mind of Jesus Christ really "contaminate" others who come into contact with Him? But that is an unavoidable consequence of claiming that the goat for Azazel represents Jesus Christ.

IS SATAN NOT REALLY INVOLVED?

Leviticus 16 is the key chapter in the Bible that reveals how human sins will be removed. Can you see that? Now here is another consequence of the claim that the goat for Azazel refers to Jesus Christ.

The claim that the Azazel goat represents Jesus Christ has the consequence that **Satan is not at all in the picture** when all human sins are removed! Satan has no part at all in the Atonement Day ceremony, if the goat for Azazel does not represent Satan. Satan gets away scot-free when human sins are fully enumerated by the High Priest. How cool is that (from Satan's point of view)?

The accessory to all human sins (i.e. Satan) very conveniently finds a real "scapegoat" (i.e. Jesus Christ) to shoulder all of his (Satan's) responsibilities in tempting, deceiving, leading and cajoling human beings into committing sins. He can watch from the sidelines the whole process of sins being removed, and he can wash his hands with the words "I had nothing to do with any of those sins". That's like all good politicians, who always manage to find someone else "to take the fall for them". **Looks like Satan managed to get Jesus Christ "to take the ultimate fall for him", doesn't it?**

That's a consequence of associating the goat for Azazel with Jesus Christ.

It's too bad that God wasn't smart enough to figure out that in all those sins Satan was **the guiltiest party of all** (I speak as a fool, like the Apostle Paul did in 2 Corinthians 11:23). And so Satan (supposedly) gets away scot-free as far as dishing out blame is concerned.

Look, when the process of the removal of all sins is explained, it is inconceivable that Satan does not feature at all in that process. When God excoriates Satan with derogatory name after derogatory name throughout the Bible, because Satan is the arch-sinner, then God will assuredly not omit Satan's part in the process required for the removal of all sins. Satan **must** be involved in that process of all sins being removed.

But by associating the goat for Azazel with Jesus Christ, **the Church of the Great God has very effectively taken Satan completely out of the picture** for the events represented by the Day of Atonement. As far as sins that need to be removed are concerned, Satan has no responsibility in that, according to CGG.

Consider also that applying the name Azazel to Jesus Christ is **exactly the same perverse approach**

as assigning the name Lucifer to Satan. It is an attempt to remove from Satan one more derogatory name that God has given to Satan. Asserting that "Heylel" means "Lucifer" is aimed at hiding the really extremely bad meaning of the Hebrew name "Heylel". And assigning the name "Azazel" to Jesus Christ is an attempt to remove from Satan another extremely derogatory name. Two Hebrew language names (Heylel and Azazel) that express gross character flaws either have their meaning changed or else they are removed from Satan. That's part of Satan's attempt to disguise himself as "an angel of light" (see 2 Corinthians 11:14). And David Grabbe's articles are aimed at removing one particular derogatory name from Satan.

There is another issue that we need to discuss.

A PERVERSE SYMBOLISM

Leviticus 16 is the only place in the Bible that tells us anything about Azazel. And we have examined that account quite thoroughly in this article. Based on this Leviticus 16 account alone, there is no way that the goat for Azazel can possibly be associated with Jesus Christ.

And so **David Grabbe didn't reach his conclusions based on Leviticus 16**. No, he concluded that the goat for Azazel represents Jesus Christ **because of symbolism** from other parts of the Bible that he has inappropriately extrapolated onto the goat for Azazel. That's really cool.

We've already seen that he totally falsely claims that the goat for Azazel was "a sacrifice". He also does not understand that when sins are placed on the goat for Azazel, then that does not involve any forgiveness for anyone.

But there is still a far worse matter to consider. And that involves verse 21.

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: (Leviticus 16:21)

The Church of the Great God claims that this verse applies to what happens to Jesus Christ.

That claim is utterly perverse!

That verse does not describe what happens to Jesus Christ!

Nobody ever lays hands on Jesus Christ in this manner, **unless** this involves a sacrifice in which **blood is shed**! When no blood is shed, meaning that no sins are forgiven, nobody can ever lay sins on the head of Jesus Christ.

And Jesus Christ did **not** take upon Himself "**all** the iniquities of the children of Israel, and **all** their transgressions in **all** their sins". No way does Jesus Christ accept **all** iniquities, transgressions and sins of **all** human beings!

Jesus Christ does not accept on His head the sins that were committed before the flood. And neither does Jesus Christ accept on His head any of the sins of anyone who ends up in the lake of fire! **Jesus Christ will never accept any of the sins of people who do not repent.**

The only sins that Jesus Christ is prepared to accept are the sins of people who have repented,

and who are still in a repentant attitude at the time when they die. Jesus Christ will never apply His shed blood to any other sins.

Now Leviticus 16:21 is not restricted to the sins committed by people who came to a real repentance, and who then stayed that way for the rest of their lives. No, Leviticus 16:21 refers to all the sins committed by all the Israelites, including those people who never really repent. Leviticus 16:21 is intended to be an all-encompassing statement.

It is offensive to suggest that Jesus Christ is prepared to shoulder the sins of those who hate Him until the day they die, i.e. those who never come to repentance.

Leviticus 16:21 is all about conferring responsibility for sins onto the head of the one who really is responsible. While Jesus Christ accepts **the penalties** incurred for the sins committed by people who repent, **Jesus Christ never accepts responsibility for those sins**.

Pay the penalties incurred by repentant people ... yes! But accept responsibility and guilt for any person's sins ... no!

Leviticus 16:21 has nothing at all to do with **accepting penalties** incurred by repentant people. If it was about accepting penalties, then that goat would have to be killed, because accepting the penalties entails the shedding of blood. But that doesn't happen here. So this verse is only about **identifying** the one who bears **responsibility** for all sins committed. And that does not apply to Jesus Christ. There is a huge difference between accepting penalties and accepting responsibility.

This in turn means that David Grabbe totally misapplied this verse to something (i.e. forgiveness for sins) that is not discussed in this verse. This verse deals with a completely different subject (i.e. it deals with placing responsibility where it rightly belongs ... on the head of Satan). And attempting to place responsibility for sins on Jesus Christ is extremely perverse.

Let's look at one more flaw involved in claiming that the goat for Azazel represents Jesus Christ.

THE TIMING IS COMPLETELY WRONG

Let's go back to verse 15.

Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the veil, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat: (Leviticus 16:15)

Who does that goat represent? It represents Jesus Christ. That should be obvious. Now why was Jesus Christ killed? **He was killed because He accepted the penalty for the sins of all repentant human beings** from the time of the flood until the end of the 100-year period which is still future (see John 1:29).

So was He killed before or after those sins were "placed on Him"? **He was killed after human sins were placed on Him!** When He was killed, then **that ended Jesus Christ's part in the process** of making forgiveness of sins available to all human beings who will repent.

Once Jesus Christ had presented His blood before God the Father (i.e. the blood sprinkled within the veil), then that concluded Christ's part. There is no more sacrifice that He has to bring, and **there is no more guilt that can be put on Jesus Christ**.

Yes certainly, human beings can appeal to that one sacrifice for another more than 3000 years after Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins. But paying for our sins does not place any sins on the head of Jesus Christ!

Here's a simple analogy.

You incur a huge traffic fine. It is more than you can possibly pay. So Jesus Christ is prepared to pay that fine for you, provided that you really repent. However, the act of paying your fine on your behalf did not somehow make Jesus Christ responsible for your fine. Even when Jesus Christ pays that fine for you, you are still responsible for having broken the law. And you can never place the responsibility for you breaking the law on Jesus Christ! Even when Jesus Christ pays your penalty, you having broken the traffic laws never becomes Jesus Christ's responsibility. You can never place that responsibility on Christ's head! It will always remain your responsibility, though Jesus Christ will pay for you in full the penalty that you incurred (i.e. if you repent).

It is so offensive to want the place **the responsibility for human sins** on Jesus Christ!

Look, ever since three days after shedding His blood for our sins Jesus Christ has been in the presence of God the Father. And while Jesus Christ is our High Priest before God the Father, that does not mean that new sins are constantly being placed on His head (i.e. as new people come to repentance). There are no sins tolerated in the presence of God the Father.

Since Jesus Christ's crucifixion and resurrection sins have been forgiven upon real repentance, yes. But sins have not been placed on Jesus Christ's head. The symbolism with the goat for Azazel simply does not fit.

Jesus Christ has already paid the full price for all the sins of all the people who come to a real repentance. And therefore no additional sins will ever again be placed upon Jesus Christ. They are all already paid for in full. Nothing more happens to Jesus Christ after His crucifixion and resurrection.

The people who come up in the second resurrection will still be unrepentant. And only when they repent will their sins be forgiven. But at that point, when those sins are forgiven, none of them will be placed on the head of Jesus Christ, who will already have been ruling for 1000 years. When Jesus Christ rules as King of kings and as Lord of lords, no sins will ever be placed on His head.

So now let's look again at verses 20-21.

And ... 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 shall send *him* away** by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: (Leviticus 16:20-21)

This cannot possibly happen to Jesus Christ after He has presented His shed blood before God the Father!

Once Christ had shed His blood, and it was then accepted by God the Father, **you cannot go back** and once again heap all sins upon Jesus Christ! It is too late to do that after Christ has brought His sacrifice!

And to then want to lead Jesus Christ out into some wilderness is **perverse in the extreme**! His sacrifice has just been accepted, and then you want to lead Him away into some punishment ...? That is perverse! That is satanic!

Nothing like that can happen after God the Father has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. **It takes a sick mind to then want to send Jesus Christ into some wilderness!**

The timing for what is done with the live goat cannot be reconciled with what happens to Jesus Christ. But that timing fits perfectly with what will happen to Satan. Why does the Church of the Great God not want to see this obvious parallel?

One last point to consider:

When all the sins are placed on the head of the goat for Azazel, then **that amounts to a curse being placed on the individual** who is represented by the goat for Azazel. The individual who is represented by that goat is clearly being cursed! And when that goat is then led into the wilderness, that too is a curse! It is a curse to be sent into the wilderness. The goat for Azazel is clearly cursed.

Now here is a principle the Apostle Paul presented:

Wherefore I give you to understand, that **no man speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed**: and *that* no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3)

We need to understand that claiming that the goat for Azazel represents Jesus Christ amounts to **calling Jesus Christ "accursed"**! The goat for Azazel is not in any way "blessed". No, that goat is cursed! And Paul points out that people who imply that Jesus Christ is "accursed" cannot possibly have God's spirit. People who imply that Jesus Christ is cursed, **after His shed blood has been accepted by God the Father**, cannot be servants of God, not when they insult Jesus Christ like that.

Now let's briefly summarize the main points for why the name Azazel must apply to Satan, and why it cannot possibly apply to Jesus Christ.

THE MAIN POINTS SUMMARIZED

1) The goat for Azazel is **not a sacrifice**, because it is never killed by the priest. So all the reasoning about "the inappropriateness of Satan as a sacrifice" is false and misleading. This goat can and does represent Satan, because Satan will never "be killed".

2) But if the goat is not a sacrifice, then **it cannot represent Jesus Christ**, because Jesus Christ was killed for our sins. In the process of the removal of sins no animal that is not killed can possibly represent Jesus Christ.

3) The actual **meaning of the Hebrew name Azazel** is highly offensive to Jesus Christ, but it fits Satan perfectly. That meaning implies **an evil character**.

4) The High Priest represents Jesus Christ. And when the High Priest laid hands on the goat, then that goat cannot also represent Jesus Christ, because **Jesus Christ cannot lay hands upon Himself**. Such a scenario would be absurd.

5) When the High Priest comes out of the Holy of Holies, after sprinkling the blood of the goat for Jesus Christ before the throne, that pictures the time of **Christ's second coming**, when He will come from the presence of God the Father. The goat for Azazel pictures something that will only happen after Christ's second coming.

6) Once Jesus Christ had been killed for our sins, that concluded Jesus Christ's part in making the forgiveness of our sins possible. **Nothing more can be done to Jesus Christ.** To then still want to heap sins on Jesus Christ and lead him out into some punishment is a very perverse way of reasoning. What then happens to the goat for Azazel cannot possibly apply to Jesus Christ after He was killed.

7) When the name Azazel was translated into Greek in the LXX, and then subsequently translated into Latin in the Vulgate, **the bad character** side revealed by the first part of the name of Azazel **was completely hidden**. The meaning of this name was switched from the focus on the character of Azazel to a focus on the activities imposed on Azazel as a punishment. Those activities were then made to seem noble and honorable, like taking the blame for other people's sins.

8) The goat for Azazel is not in any way "a scapegoat". Azazel is not punished unfairly. Azazel is fully responsible for all the sins that are placed on his head.

9) It is highly offensive to imply that Jesus Christ would ever be led off into some punishment of total isolation by an angel. **No angel will ever** under any circumstances **lead Jesus Christ in any way**. But the angel with "a great chain in his hand" for binding Satan (see Revelation 20:1-3) is a perfect representation for an angel forcing the goat for Azazel to go into a desolate wilderness area.

10) **The casting of lots** demands that "the LORD" must be different from "Azazel". If both were the same person, then casting lots would be meaningless.

11) The story ends with all sins being placed on the head of Azazel. There is no mechanism for all those sins to ever be removed from Azazel. So **Azazel will carry all those sins on his head in perpetuity**. That cannot be Jesus Christ.

12) The Azazel goat is **never accepted by God the Father**! It is driven away, and that is the opposite of being accepted.

13) Placing all the sins on the head of Azazel has **nothing to do with forgiveness** for anyone. Forgiveness requires the shedding of blood. Placing all sins on the head of Azazel is strictly about placing responsibility and guilt where it rightly belongs, on the head of Satan.

Right, that should cover all that needs to be said.

Please note that I have deliberately only examined the account in Leviticus 16 itself, with relatively few references to other Scriptures. The account is really self-explanatory. I have not appealed to what Mr. Armstrong or anyone else may have said about Azazel, because any such appeals would only be a distraction. **Leviticus 16 is easy to understand** without seeking information elsewhere. My statements are based on analyzing the information provided in Leviticus 16 in its own context.

I am not interested in any other cute symbolism that someone may seek to attach to "the goat for Azazel" ceremony. With many things in the Bible people find all kinds of symbolisms that are not at all intended by God. People also do that with the goat for Azazel. The symbolism I have referred to in this article speaks for itself. If you don't agree, that has nothing to do with me.

I have exposed major flaws in the assumed premises for David Grabbe's teaching. In other words, I have demolished that heretical teaching. People who want to believe that the Azazel goat represents Jesus Christ will continue to do so, no matter what evidence I may present, and no matter how methodically I might demolish one assertion after another. They will argue against every point I have raised. But that is not my problem.

I am not going to further disprove this heresy one statement after the other, as I have done in the past for certain other heretical teachings. Instead, I have in this article presented the correct explanation for the statements in Leviticus 16 about the goat for Azazel, and in the process I have demolished the false teaching.

If you still believe that the goat for Azazel refers to Jesus Christ, then that is your problem, and I can't help you. Just understand that asserting that Azazel refers to Jesus Christ is a one-way road for anyone who previously understood that the name Azazel refers to Satan. This is not meant to be a threat; it is simply a realistic and objective assessment of a false teaching that embodies an enormous insult for Jesus Christ.

And yes, Mr. Armstrong's explanation for the goat for Azazel has been correct all along.

Frank W Nelte