

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND SATAN'S FATE

Satan hates you. If you're a Christian who obeys God's commandments, Satan wants to destroy you: "And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world....And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring (symbolically, the Church or children of God), *who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*" (Revelation 12:9, 17).

This isn't mere hyperbole. Satan is venomously upset because you, as "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17), will inherit what he has been trying to get his hands on: the Kingdom of God. And he will try desperately to prevent you from receiving your inheritance.

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:1). Satan will receive his comeuppance shortly after Jesus returns. Believe it or not, Satan's fate was revealed long ago, in an obscure ceremony on the Day of Atonement.

"The Feasts of the Lord"

Over a thousand years before Christ, God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Afterward God revealed His Festivals and Holy Days, which occur during the spring, summer, and fall harvests. "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The *feasts of the LORD*, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, *these are My feasts*'" (Leviticus 23:1). Notice that they're not Jewish or Hebraic feasts; rather, they are God's feasts.

These Holy Days and Festivals reminded the Israelites that:

- 1 God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt (*Passover & the Feast of Unleavened Bread*);
- 2 God had blessed them (*the Feast of Firstfruits, or Weeks*);
- 3 God will protect them when they're in battle, and He has provided them with special events throughout the year, announced by the blowing of *shofars* or trumpets (hence the *Feast of the Memorial of the Blowing of Trumpets*);
- 4 God will forgive them when they repent of their sins (*Day of Atonement*); and
- 5 God provided for them during their forty-year trek in the wilderness, and will continue to do so (*Feast of Tabernacles* and the day immediately following this Feast, hereinafter referred to as the *Last Great Day*).

God chose the Israelites for the following reasons:

- 1 “For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but *because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers*, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 7:6-8). God chose Israel because He loved them, and because of His promise to Abraham, who obeyed His laws (Genesis 26:5);
- 2 Israel served as a vehicle in God’s plan to redeem mankind. The prophesied Messiah (Jesus) would come through Israel; and
- 3 God wanted to preserve His laws: “What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God” (Romans 3:1-2)

Preservation of the Law (including the Holy Days and Festivals) through the Israelites had two purposes: (i) obviously the Law of God would be kept alive among mankind, and (ii) by obeying these laws, Israel would serve as an example to other nations: “Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’” (Deuteronomy 4:5-6). The law of God, the seventh-day Sabbath, and the Holy Days and Festivals, would be magnified through an obedient Israel. Unfortunately, rarely was Israel obedient to God.

The Law of God and the Holy Days and Festivals would shine through an obedient Israel. Therefore, the significance of God’s Holy Days and Festivals transcended boundaries. They are also timeless: they reveal the plan of God, which has unfolded over several thousands of years.

The Ancient Day of Atonement

“Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make *atonement* for you before the LORD your God” (Leviticus 23:27-28).

Atonement means “reparation for an offense or injury” (*Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*). In other words, if you do something wrong, you must pay. Each person should repent when he or she sins. What is sin? It’s the transgression of God’s law: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (I John 3:4). In other words, whenever we break God’s commandments (including His Holy Days and Festivals), we sin. And God will forgive us only when we repent.

Whenever a particular Israelite sinned, God expected him or her to repent. However, He also ordained a ***national day of repentance***: the Day of Atonement, which occurs on the tenth day of the seventh month in the Hebraic calendar (corresponding to our September or October).

On this Day, God commanded the Israelites to fast in recognition of their sins, and of their need for God's mercy. God also commanded the high priest (Aaron in Leviticus 16) to perform an elaborate ceremony consisting of the selection of two goats – one for the “Lord,” to be slain as a sin offering; and one that will symbolically bear responsibility for Israel's sins.

“He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the ***scapegoat*** shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness....Then he shall kill the ***goat of the sin offering***, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness” (Leviticus 16:7-10, 15-16).

The slain goat was Israel's “sin offering.” The live goat was symbolically responsible for Israel's sins: “*Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness*” (Leviticus 16:21-22). Notice that this goat was escorted into the wilderness by a “suitable man.”

The live goat is inappropriately labeled as the “scapegoat.” This term implies that the goat was unfairly blamed for the sins of Israel. However, this word is translated from the Hebrew word *Azazel*, which literally means “goat of departure.” This goat of departure symbolically bore responsibility for Israel's sins. And in departing, it symbolically took Israel's sins with it into the wilderness.

Biblical symbolism & metaphor

The Bible is rich in metaphor and other figures of speech. For example, Jesus is referred to as a Lamb; the dictator who fights Christ at His return as a beast; and Satan himself as a dragon and roaring lion: “your adversary the devil walks about like a *roaring lion*, seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8). Jesus was not a literal lamb, and the dictator will not be an actual beast. Similarly, Herod was not a fox (Luke 13:32).

God's Holy Days and Festivals are also rich in metaphor and symbolism. For example, God commanded the Israelites to slay a spotless lamb in commemoration of the Passover. (In Egypt, God passed over the Israelite households with the blood of slain lambs on their doorposts, on His way to slay the firstborn of each Egyptian household. This act provoked Pharaoh into releasing the Israelites from bondage.) Moreover, God commanded the Israelites to eat unleavened bread for the seven days following Passover, in commemoration of their hasty flight from Egypt; their exodus was so sudden that their bread did not have time to rise or leaven.

Similarly, God commanded them to live in “booths,” or temporary dwellings, for seven days during the seventh month in the Hebraic calendar. “You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Leviticus 23:42-43).

The significance of the symbolism inherent in these Holy Days and Festivals became apparent in 31 AD. Only then did the apostles realize that, for example, the ancient Passover foreshadowed Jesus’ death: hence Paul’s designation, “Christ our Passover.” *By calling Jesus “our Passover,” Paul demonstrated the Christian relevance of God’s Holy Days and Festivals,* as found throughout the Old Testament. Elsewhere, Paul writes, “So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a *festival* or a new moon or Sabbaths, *which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ*” (Colossians 2:16-17). Here Paul described the Festivals as “shadow(s) of things to come...” In other words, the Festivals and Holy Days foreshadow, or predict, certain significant events. The Passover foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus “our Passover.” What, then, do the other Festivals and Holy Days signify? They reveal God’s sequential seven-step plan for man:

1. **Passover:** Acceptance of Jesus as our atoning sacrificial Lamb that was foreshadowed by the ancient Passover sacrifice. “For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us” (I Corinthians 5:7);
2. **Feast of Unleavened Bread:** In accepting the sacrifice of the unleavened “bread from heaven,” that is, Jesus (John 6:41), and understanding that, biblically, leaven represents sin (I Corinthians 5:7), Paul thus urges us to “*keep the feast* (of Unleavened Bread), not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (I Corinthians 5:7-8).
3. **Pentecost,** anciently the *Feast of Firstfruits:* Those who have God’s Spirit are called firstfruits (I Corinthians 15:23, James 1:18, Revelation 14:4), and Jesus was the First of the firstfruits. Pentecost is also the birthday of Christianity and God’s Church, which is the collection of God’s saints or firstfruits.
4. **Feast of the Memorial of the Blowing of Trumpets:** The plan of God unfolds in these Festivals. Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread point back to Christ, as does Pentecost in pointing us back to the birthday of the Church. Sequentially, the Feast of the Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets looks forward to the return of Jesus and the first resurrection: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the *trumpet of God*, and the dead in Christ will rise first” (I Thessalonians 4:16).
5. **Day of Atonement:** What happens after Jesus returns? The banishment of Satan, itself symbolized in the aforementioned ancient Israelite ceremony conducted on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). The ceremony foreshadowed Jesus’ sacrifice in the first century and foretells Satan’s banishment during the Millennium. Only at that time will man be “at one” with God.

6. **Feast of Tabernacles:** After Satan has been banished, Jesus will establish His Kingdom. We shall be kings and priests in that Kingdom (Revelation 5:10). Since this Feast follows the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Tabernacles foreshadows the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.
7. **The Last Great Day** immediately follows the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles. This Day represents the second resurrection for everyone not resurrected one thousand years earlier, and the ensuing 100-year judgment period in which everyone will have an opportunity for salvation.

The *Day of Atonement*, the fifth sequential step in God's plan for us, follows the Feast of the Memorial of Blowing Trumpets, which represents the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the saints. (For understanding of the Festival of the Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets, please read our article entitled *The Feast of Trumpets and the Return of Jesus*.) What happens after Jesus returns?

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years" (Revelation 20:1).

Jesus and Satan

The ancient Holy Days and Festivals are "shadow(s) of things to come" (Colossians 2:17). The *Passover* foreshadowed Jesus' sacrifice, and the ensuing *Feast of Unleavened Bread* signifies our acceptance of His broken and dead body as our sin offering (Romans 8:3), and our determination to become sinless. The *Feast of Firstfruits* (or *Weeks*) became Pentecost in 31 AD; it commemorates the birthday of Christianity and the Church. The *Feast of the Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets* anticipates the return of Jesus and the concurrent first resurrection. The *Feast of Tabernacles* foreshadows the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth, and the *Last Great Day* looks forward to the second resurrection and the ensuing Great White Throne Judgment period in which everyone not resurrected 1,000 years earlier (in the first resurrection) will have a chance for salvation.

Between the festivals of the Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets and Tabernacles is the *Day of Atonement*. According to God's sequential seven-step plan, the event between Jesus' return and the first resurrection (symbolized in the Feast of the Memorial of Blowing of Trumpets) and the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth (the Feast of Tabernacles) is the banishment of Satan; an angel will come down from heaven and throw him an abyss, and his demons will join him there (Revelation 20:1).

Satan being thrown into the abyss from which he can't escape is remarkably similar to the aforementioned ceremony on the Day of Atonement, in which the live goat that symbolically bears responsibility for the "iniquities of the children of Israel" is led into the "wilderness by the hand of a suitable man" (Leviticus 16:21-22). In consideration of Satan's fate and of how he is partly responsible for the sins of the world, the live goat in this ceremony on the Day of Atonement represented Satan.

As recognized in the sacrifice of the goat "for the Lord," Satan is not wholly responsible for Israel's and our sins. The "goat of the sin offering" is killed because of the sins of the

Israelites. It is their sin offering. The apostle Paul refers to Jesus as our sin offering: “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an *offering for sin*, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:3-4). The “requirement” for breaking God’s law is death: “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). By becoming our sin offering, Jesus removed the requirement, or penalty (death), of breaking the law: “*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us* (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’)” (Galatians 3:13).

It’s crystal clear that the ancient ceremony of slaying and exiling goats on the Day of Atonement foreshadowed, respectively, Jesus’ sacrifice in 31 AD, and the banishment of Satan at the outset of the Millennium, just before the establishment of God’s Kingdom.

Moreover, Jesus’ sacrifice makes us “at one” with God. Even *Webster’s Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* recognizes the significance of atonement: “the reconciliation of God and man through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.” This reconciliation between God and man, and the banishment of Satan, was foretold by the ancient Day of Atonement.

Satan’s fate

Satan is on a mission to destroy God’s saints who “keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). He’s upset at them because they’ll inherit what he believes is rightfully his: the Kingdom of God.

The Bible specifies three archangels by name: Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer. Two of these archangels – Michael and Gabriel – remain devoted to God. Lucifer, however, is another story. “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, saying: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms?’” (Isaiah 14:12-16).

In Isaiah 14 God condemns the king of Babylon. However, He inspired Isaiah to include a passage about Satan, or rather, Lucifer. Isaiah wrote that Lucifer fell from heaven, and Jesus corroborated this account: “And He (Jesus) said to them, ‘I watched Satan fall from heaven like lightning’” (Luke 10:18).

Satan’s original name was Lucifer, which means “morning star.” Lucifer’s hubris motivated his attempt to overthrow God (exalting his “throne above the stars of God”). Furthermore, Isaiah identifies Satan’s plan to “weaken the nations.” Elsewhere, Satan is described as deceiving the nations (Revelation 12:9).

Ezekiel also describes Lucifer: “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created. You were the *anointed cherub who covers*; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were

perfect in your ways from the day you were created, *till iniquity was found in you*. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned. Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones. *Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty*; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor” (Ezekiel 28:12-17). Again, in the middle of a condemnation of a king, this time of Tyre, God inspires Ezekiel to include a passage about Lucifer. Ezekiel referred to his subject as being in “Eden, the garden of God.” Moreover, he was the “anointed cherub who covers.” Obviously God is not referring to Adam, but to Lucifer.

Ezekiel delivers important clues as to why Lucifer turned into Satan the devil:

- 1 God refers to Lucifer as the “*anointed cherub who covers*.” This poetic description suggests that Lucifer occupied a very high position in the government of God. Lucifer was on the “holy mountain of God,” which implies he had access to God’s throne.
- 2 As Isaiah indicated, Lucifer became very proud. “Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Jesus said that Satan fell “from heaven like lightning” (Luke 10:18). Lucifer was too proud for his own good (“Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty”). As Ezekiel stated, Satan “corrupted” his “wisdom for the sake of” his “splendor.”

Lucifer attempted to overthrow God. Because of his position and charisma, and because God entrusted him with authority over one-third of the angels, Lucifer was able to convince an innumerable amount of them to conduct a coup against God. This attempted coup precipitated the first and original star wars.

The universe has never recovered from the wreckage caused by this war. In the initial chapters of Genesis we see a ruined world in which the continents are buried underneath the oceans, and the “Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

Lucifer’s rebellion turned him into Satan the devil. He will again try to overthrow God (Revelation 12), and when he fails, Satan will inspire the false prophet to declare himself to be God incarnate: “Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day (the day of the Lord, His return to earth) will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the *man of sin* is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, *showing himself that he is God*” (II Thessalonians 2:3-4).

Paul calls Satan the “prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2), and the “god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). Satan is very angry at the children of God because they will inherit what he believes is rightfully his: the Kingdom of God. Therefore, after his failure to overthrow God (again), Satan will “make war with the rest of her offspring (the members of God’s family), who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17).

Satan’s failure

Despite his unbelievable power and intelligence, and despite his dominion over this earth (Paul calls Satan the “god of this world,” II Corinthians 4:4), ultimately Satan is a failure. Satan has:

- 1 failed twice to overthrow God;
- 2 failed to kill Jesus, and to tempt Him into sinning and thus disqualifying Himself from becoming our Savior; and
- 3 failed to destroy God's Church.

Moreover, Satan will fail to prevent us (those who keep God's commandment and have the testimony of Jesus) from inheriting the Kingdom of God, and from becoming kings and priests in it (Revelation 5:10). And Satan will fail to prevent his fate.

The Day of Atonement foreshadowed the sacrifice of Jesus, and His victory over Satan on that stake. Furthermore, it foreshadowed Satan's failure to prevent Jesus from becoming our Savior. And it predicts Satan's failure to prevent his temporary banishment at the outset of the Millennium, and his permanent exile (alluded to in the book of Jude, verses 12 & 13). According to Jude's allusion, Satan and his demons will be like "wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" (Jude 12, 13).

God will eventually send Satan and his demons into permanent exile, into a dark, impenetrable void (not unlike a massive black hole) from which there is no escape. They will be there forever, with each other and their thoughts; bickering, accusatory, angry demons without light and hope. This is Satan's fate, foretold long ago in an obscure ceremony on the Day of Atonement.

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