

Are We Wrong The Symbolic Identity of Azazel (The Scapegoat)

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Contents

I.	Abstract	1
II.	Introduction	1
III.	Event Introduction and Current Interpretations	4
	A. Evangelical Views	6
	B. The Adventist View	7
IV.	Assumptions	10
	A. Avoiding the Name “Scapegoat”	11
	B. The Second Goat Travels to Azazel	12
	C. The Second Goat Performs Atoning Work	18
	D. Satan is Azazel	26
V.	Issues with Interpretation	34
	A. Issues with Evangelical Views	34
	B. Issues with the Adventist View	36
VI.	A Solution to the Enigma of the Azazel Ritual	47
	A. Christ as the Goat to Azazel	48
	B. The Antitypical Time to the Rites	52
VII.	Conclusion	59
VIII.	Notable Areas for Future Study	61
IX.	Update Notes	66
X.	Bibliography	68

Abstract

Currently, two groups stand divided on how to interpret the scapegoat ritual symbolically. Typical Evangelical scholarship holds that the second goat is Christ. Adventists hold that the term scapegoat, translating to Azazel, is Satan. In recent scholarship, both groups have identified that the goat is going to Azazel; the goat is not traveling as the scapegoat (as Azazel). This would suggest that the live goat symbolically should not be identified as the one it is going to. While Adventists have tried to reconcile this, this remains a problematic idea to current Adventist beliefs. In such a case, a solution to this issue might be found in recognizing Azazel to be Satan and the live goat to be Christ while utilizing the Adventist timing of events, merging the Adventist and Evangelical views. While this leads to a minor shift from the Adventist view on interpreting the Day of Atonement, the depth found in making the small shift leads to deeper support of the Adventist view of eschatology and soteriology.

Introduction

The doctrine of the sanctuary is fundamental to the Seventh-day Adventist church. Over the past 200 years of Adventism's history, Adventism has come to a nearly unanimous agreement about the nature of the sanctuary. However, interest outside the Seventh-day Adventist church on this subject is growing.¹ This growing interest and their differing interpretations of the sanctuary may lead some Adventists to question their traditional view on the sanctuary doctrine, as has happened in Adventism's past. Some Evangelical Christians have even incorrectly classified

¹ Tim Mackee and Jon Collins, "Leviticus: What is the Day of Atonement," *BibleProject*, July 4, 2022, <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/what-day-atonement/>; L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015); David M. Moffitt, *Rethinking the Atonement: New Perspectives on Jesus's Death, Resurrection, and Ascension* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2022).

Adventism as a cult for this belief.² Having a proper understanding of this topic is crucial if this doctrine is to hinder Adventist's ministry to other Christians. It behooves us, then, to make sure we have answered all questions related to the sanctuary. In this paper, I will argue that while we may have the timing of the scapegoat ritual correct, there is still work to be done regarding the question of who is represented by the goat that goes to Azazel.

Among all scholars, both Adventist and Evangelical, there is a firm understanding that the scapegoat is a demonic figure.³ However, there is more to the picture than meets the eye. To truly understand who the goat and scapegoat are, we must first understand that the two are separate entities and that "scapegoat" is a misleading translation. The term "scapegoat" is not a good translation because "scapegoat" is an interpolation of the name Azazel, not the title of the goat. Because "goat" and "scapegoat" sound quite similar, some have problematically believed "scapegoat" is a title. Rather, the goat travels to Azazel (the scapegoat).⁴ Who, then, is Azazel? Who is the scapegoat? Most Christian scholars understand that Azazel not only symbolizes a demonic being but is likely Satan himself. While some Jewish sources have argued that Azazel is a location, the juxtaposition of the Lord and Azazel, along with the earliest records of the name, indicate that Azazel was understood to be a personal being, one of demonic nature.⁵

² Eric Mason (@pastoremase). "This is a Quick Response to those in the SDA Church..." Instagram, April 23, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/pastoremase/reel/C6HgW0My4pv/>

³ See Jerry A. Gladson, "The Enigma of Azazel in Leviticus 16" (MA Thesis, Vanderbilt University, 1973), 94-99.

⁴ See Ángel M Rodríguez, "Leviticus" in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel M Rodríguez, et al. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2020), 263; Roy E. Gane, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 264. See 261-265 for the full discussion.

⁵ For Azazel as a personal name, see Gladson, "Enigma," 88. For Azazel's existence in early Jewish literature, see William H. Shea, "Azazel in the Pseudepigrapha," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 2002): 1-9.

Adventists take this further by arguing that the goat that goes to Azazel also represents Azazel because it appears the goat might belong to him (Lev. 16:8).⁶ From this, Adventists have connected the departure of the goat into the wilderness with Satan's banishment into the bottomless pit during the millennium.⁷ Evangelicals, on the other hand, do not believe that the live goat symbolizes Satan. They claim it symbolizes Christ, often suggesting that Christ's 1st-century work fulfilled all of the Day of Atonement.⁸ Their arguments rest on linguistic patterns, the fact that only the second goat bears sins, and the unity of the goats.

Each side has strong argument points. How should this be resolved? What is the identity of the scapegoat, and what does our symbolic understanding of the scapegoat mean for the events that occur during the antitypical day of atonement? The resolution to this dilemma is simpler than one might think. One feature of the text allows for a reconciliation between these two schools currently in disagreement. Within Leviticus 16, the goat travels to Azazel (vv. 10, 26). The original name for Azazel has the prepositional prefix לָ (*la* in *la'aza'zel*) appended to it, which is usually directional (to, toward, for). As especially seen in v. 10, this indicates that the goat is being sent to Azazel. This, among several other reasons, serves as a challenge to the current Adventist view because the goat is separated from Azazel and not Azazel himself. The idea that Azazel is already in the wilderness is not currently contemplated by Adventists when discussing the symbolism behind the ritual. This suggests there is reasonable cause to re-evaluate the current understanding of the ritual. Based on the evidence available, the Adventist view on the timing of the ritual (after

⁶ Richard Davidson, *A Song for the Sanctuary: Experiencing God's Presence in Shadow and Reality* (Silver Spring: Biblical Research Institute, 2022), 330.

⁷ *Seventh-Day Adventists Believe* (Washington, D.C: Ministerial Association, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1988), 357.

⁸ E.g. Mackee, *Leviticus*, 00:58:30; Morales, *Mountain*, 243; Ralph D. Levy, "The Symbolism of the Azazel Goat" (Ph.D. Diss., Union University, 1998), 61-76 & 95-98.

the pre-advent judgment) and the identity of Azazel should be maintained, but the identity of the live goat and the specific events pictured should be reevaluated.

Event Introduction and Current Interpretations

The Day of Atonement is the center of the Pentateuch, making it the chiastic climax. Atonement might be seen as “the central doctrine of the Pentateuch.”⁹ It should be no surprise, bearing that in mind, that Jews regard this as the greatest day of the year.¹⁰ Under that understanding, the nature of Leviticus 16 should not be a simple plan of rituals to follow. It is a sequential order of events that allows sins to be absolved. Before continuing, a brief introduction is required to understand how the Day of Atonement is interpreted. The first thing we learn in Leviticus 16 is that there is a problem: due to the corruption of the sanctuary, man may not easily enter the Most Holy Place lest he die. The preceding context to Lev. 16 is found in Lev. 10, where we learn Aaron’s sons Nadab and Abihu died due to recklessness and, in consequence, have made the sanctuary ritually unclean. Lev. 16:1 presents this as the crisis behind the Day of Atonement, and it might be that it was on the same day as the Day of Atonement. The first step in the Day of Atonement’s resolution to this and the other accumulated sins is to prepare the high priest (Lev. 16:2-4). After sacrificing a bull, the high priest brought incense to the altar of incense so that the smoke may come up so that he might not die by being in the presence of the Lord. He then takes the blood of the bull and sprinkles it on and in front of the mercy seat. This sacrifice is intended to atone for the high priest and his family.¹¹ This does not atone for the rest of the priesthood or the people. The following ritual utilizes a sinless goat. It is killed, and its pure blood is brought and

⁹ Morales, *Mountain*, 177.

¹⁰ Talmud Yoma 20a:1: “Since that day is exalted above all others, there is no room for the accusations of Satan.”

¹¹ The bull sacrifice is typically set aside in interpretation. Because Christ serves as our High Priest, there is no reason to atone for him because he never sinned.

sprinkled throughout the sanctuary to atone for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting, and the altar of incense (Lev. 16:20). Once the high priest returns to the courtyard, he places the sin of the people on a second goat sometimes called the scapegoat. As to be explained below, the goat itself is separate from the “scapegoat.” The term is better translated literally as “Azazel,” which scholars recognize to be a wilderness demon synonymous with Satan. The way Leviticus 16 is presented sees sin moving outward; sin is expiated out of the Most Holy Place, then out of the Holy Place, next to the courtyard, and the sin finally makes its way out into the wilderness to Azazel. With a general introduction to the rites of the Day of Atonement, we may turn our attention to how these events are interpreted.

In the book of Hebrews, the writer claims that the earthly gifts and sacrifices “serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things” (Heb. 8:5).¹² Moreover, the writer says that Christ, serving as our high priest, “entered not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf” (Heb. 9:24). It is clear that the Levitical rituals were not simply rites to be observed but prophetically revealed things to be fulfilled on a grand, heavenly scale. The Day of Atonement account found in Leviticus 16 serves as the central example of this. This was the sole day that the Jewish nation could find resolution to sin. Some Jews even believed that they could sin as much as they wanted because this day would resolve everything.¹³ As this day provides a systematic plan to resolve sin, careful study has been dedicated because this day should be closely related to the process Christ is going through to resolve sin. For example, there is a unanimous understanding that the first goat, the goat to the Lord, symbolizes Christ’s death on the cross.¹⁴ The goat, like Christ, was sinless. Both shed their

¹² Unless otherwise noted, all citations from the Bible are from the English Standard Version (ESV).

¹³ Talmud Yoma 87a:8

¹⁴ E.g. *Seventh-Day Adventists Believe*, 353-354; Moffitt, *Rethinking*, 148-149.

blood to make atonement. Likewise, the high priest points to Christ's priestly ministry as Hebrews 2-10 discusses. However, beyond these two antitypes, scholarship is overrun with dissension. Most visibly, there is debate as to what the scapegoat ritual and the cleansing of the sanctuary point to. Evangelical and Seventh-day Adventist views on these are often juxtaposed.

Evangelical Views

In the Evangelical world, the identity of the scapegoat is both unified and disunified.¹⁵ By generalization, the Evangelical world claims that the "scapegoat" is Christ. However, this would do a disservice to Evangelical scholars. Many translations of the Bible translate the original Hebrew word *la'aza'zel* as "[serving] as the scapegoat" (NASB, NKJV, NIV). Pastors and their congregations might only get this exposure to the text and base their conclusions on this. However, most Evangelical scholars do not accept such a translation. *La'aza'zel*, which is more literally translated as "to Azazel," is the majority rendering among scholars.¹⁶ This idea is well-revealed in Lev. 16:26, which can be translated as "the goat to Azazel" (ESV, NRSV). Azazel and the goat are seen as separate entities in such a context. For those aware that Azazel is the real name behind "scapegoat," there is a wide understanding that Azazel is a demonic figure, most likely associated with Satan. The goat going to Azazel, on the other hand, is viewed as a separate entity. This goat typifies Christ's work of atoning for people by bearing the sins of the people (Lev 16:21-22) since there are explicit statements which state Christ bears the sins of all (e.g. Jn. 1:29, 1 Pt. 2:24, Isa 53:6). It is not uncommon to associate the ritual with Christ's resurrection, his 40 days in the wilderness, his "descent to hell" as the Apostles' Creed says, or the release of Barabbas in Pilate's

¹⁵ The term "Evangelical" spans a large group of people, and the scope of this paper is inadequate in fully revealing all viewpoints available.

¹⁶ Levy, *Symbolism*, 32.

Hall.¹⁷ However, there is no unanimous agreement as to what event is the antitype. The sanctuary's atonement is generally accepted to be accomplished through Christ's 1st-century ministry. Verses such as Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:23-27 have led many to the conclusion that Christ's atoning work was fully completed through Christ's death. However, this does not represent all scholars. Some, led by David Moffitt's work in Hebrews, are reconsidering the evidence, as highlighted in the book *Rethinking the Atonement*.¹⁸ It should not be a surprise if the Evangelical majority accepts this idea within the next 50 years.

The Adventist View

Seventh-day Adventists hold views different from the rest of the Evangelical world. The basis for this is a historicist interpretation of the Day of Atonement's events. Historicism is characterized by the belief that prophecy is neither a reflection of the past nor centered on one event at the end of time. Rather, historicism believes prophecy is a revelation of ongoing history. To Adventists, the Day of Atonement reveals the plan to resolve sin. Each ritual points to specific events that resolve the issue of sin.

The day starts with a crisis of two men who die in the sanctuary (Lev. 10; 16:1). Adventists have not given that crisis any meaning, but a couple of recent papers have noted that the event has parallels to the "death" of Adam and Eve in the garden, an idea lining well with a historicist understanding of the Day of Atonement.¹⁹ As such, it is foreseeable that this may enter into future Adventist typology. In addition to the crisis of the sanctuary's physical defilement, moral defilement has also occurred through the sins that have been brought in through the year-round

¹⁷ E.g. Gladson, "Enigma," 74-87; Hans Moscike, "Jesus as Goat of the Day of Atonement in Recent Synoptic Gospels Research," *Currents in Biblical Research* 17, no. 1 (Oct. 2018): 59-85; Morales, *Mountain*, 243.

¹⁸ See Moffitt, *Rethinking*, 135-158. See also David M. Moffitt, *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Boston: Brill, 2011). For an Adventist perspective, c.f. *Issues in the Book of Hebrews*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1989).

¹⁹ See note 2.1 in "Notable Areas for Future Study" for more information.

services. The sins accumulated in the sanctuary are not merely a yearly issue to resolve. Symbolically, Christ's death on the cross has moved sins from the hands of man into the hands of God just as the year-round services did. Despite no longer being in man's hands, these sins still exist between man and God, and as such the barrier demands itself to be further removed.

The first step in resolving these sins is the bull offering. Generally, it is understood that this ritual does not apply in Christ's circumstances. Because he is a sinless high priest, there may be no need to use a bull offering (e.g., Heb. 9:23).²⁰ However, this is not the whole view. As Leslie Hardinge argues, there may be some typological fulfillment in that incense, symbolizing intercession, is brought into the Most Holy Place.²¹ Moreover, considering 1 Peter 2:9,²² Christ's followers may be part of Christ's priestly family, which is atoned for the bull offering. Such a division has not been fully studied and would require further research.

The event following the bull offering, the re-entrance into the Most Holy Place to atone using the sacrificial goat, has been an influential part of the Seventh-day Adventist identity. It is at the very center of Leviticus 16, and thus its chiastic value indicates it is not something to overlook. In Daniel 8:13-14, we are told that the sanctuary would be trampled underfoot for 2300 days by a little horn power. Afterward, the sanctuary would be restored to its rightful state. Parallel to that, in Daniel 7, we see an oppressive little horn power. However, instead of the sanctuary being restored to its rightful state, we are told of judgment in heaven (Dan. 7:9-12), and it seems the saints are under judgment (Dan 7:22). Because of the parallel, Adventists have connected

²⁰ See also Hebrews 9:23.

²¹ Leslie Hardinge, *With Jesus in His Sanctuary: A Walk Through the Tabernacle Along His Way* (Harrisburg: American Cassette Ministries, 1991), 511.

²² Also, c.f. Ps. 110:3, where Christ's followers wear holy garments, and Ezk. 44:15-31, with Zadok's priesthood is wearing holy linen garments.

atonement and restoration.²³ Considering the parallels, Daniel 8's restoration/cleansing has been associated with the atonement of the sanctuary through goat blood on the Day of Atonement. Following Dan. 7's judgment in heaven, we see the return of Christ. In Dan. 7:13, the Son of Man, Christ, comes with the clouds of heaven, just like in Rev. 1:7. Hence, the second coming follows the sanctuary's atonement. There are heavenly beings that have questions and doubts (Job 4:18, 15:15), and this judgment allows them to serve as a jury and see that Christ's death was valid for salvation to all who accept it. During the cleansing of the sanctuary, Jesus is playing the priestly role of a judge (Ezk. 44:24) while also representing us, his blood standing in place of our sins.²⁴ His death stands in our place, hence why Christ's believers are never judged and why judgment is in favor of the saints (Jn. 5:24; Dan. 7:14). After this judgment finishes, Christ exits heaven (the sanctuary) to finish the last bit of atonement—actuating his atonement by literally removing our sins at the second coming.²⁵

The next series of events, known as the scapegoat ritual, should logically follow the pre-advent judgment. They should take place during the second coming and/or the millennium. In the year following the Great Disappointment in 1844, it was the goal of Edson, Hahn, and Crosier to identify what event, following the pre-advent judgment, could typify the live goat being cast into the wilderness. One event spanning the entire millennium comes to mind: Satan's banishment. They understood the name of the goat to be Azazel, indicating the goat was Satan (though this is not held today).²⁶ In addition, the lots cast are grammatically parallel—one for Azazel, one for the

²³ Davidson, *Song*, 493-552; William Shea, "Unity of Daniel" In *Symposium on Daniel* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 185-219.

²⁴ For priests as judges, cf. Deut. 21:5, Zech. 3:7. For Christ's roles in the judgment, see Davidson, *Song*, 743-762.

²⁵ Lev. 16:17; Heb. 9:28. See Ángel Rodríguez, "The Day of Atonement as Related to the Contamination and Purification of the Sanctuary" in *The Seventy Weeks, Leviticus, and the Nature of Prophecy* (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 254.

²⁶ O. R. L. Crosier, "The Law of Moses," *The Day Star Extra*, February 7, 1846, 43. The modern Adventist interpretation believes the goat is the representative of Azazel, not that the goat is named Azazel.

Lord. It can be perceived that the goats are juxtaposed by the fact their recipients are juxtaposed. Moreover, the bottomless pit of Revelation 20 shares excellent unity with the wilderness. There is a theme of a cosmic wasteland throughout the Bible, and the wilderness, pit, and sea are commonly used to convey such a theme.²⁷ Moreover, the legal demands for Satan to take on sin are apparent. In Deut. 19:18-19, it says, “If the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.” While it is a name, Satan is the Hebrew word for “accuser.” In Revelation 12:10, Satan is described as the “accuser of our brothers.” In the heavenly court, he surely must be accusing us of deserving to bear the sin ourselves that Christ bore for us. Naturally, “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). We would need to die for our sins. But the judgment is found in favor of the saints (Dan 7:22), and the accusations will make a U-turn back to Satan. He will need to face the wages of bearing sin. While Seventh-day Adventist documentation of how the scapegoat ritual aligns with Satan’s punishment is often vague, the general understanding is that the goat being dragged off into the wilderness fulfills Satan being dragged down into the bottomless pit before the millennium.²⁸ Following that, in Lev. 16:22, the goat is set free into the wilderness; it is not killed. Being a domesticated animal, the goat would eventually die in the wilderness. In the same way, Satan will spend an extended time in the cosmic “wilderness” until he dies in the lake of fire.²⁹

Assumptions

Because Adventists have assumed that Satan’s imprisonment is the only thing that can be pictured by the scapegoat ritual, Adventism’s view of the scapegoat ritual has stayed fixed in place

²⁷ Morales, *Mountain*, 239-243.

²⁸ Davidson, while not perfectly clear, seems in favor of this. See Davidson, *Song*, 332.

²⁹ The bottomless pit of Rev. 20 uses the same language used in Gen. 1 to refer to the formless and void earth. The desolate wilderness fits well with this. See Ranko Stefanovic, *Plain Revelation* (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2013), 232.

and views have stayed relatively unchanged. However, as research in Leviticus has developed, Adventist scholars have been required to adjust the ritual to fit the fulfillment of Satan's banishment in four main ways. First, the term "scapegoat" is outdated and no longer a viable term. Second, the live goat does not travel *as/for* Azazel but *to* Azazel. Third, the act of bringing that sin-laden goat to Azazel is classified as atonement according to Lev. 16:10. Fourth, while not necessarily steering from the Adventist view, the understanding of Azazel has further developed, such that there is conclusive evidence that Azazel is another name for Satan, and importantly, the oldest literature outside the Bible using the term Azazel merges the imagery of the Day of Atonement with Revelation 20, hence providing strong grounds to connect the two events. These ideas must be contemplated before discussing the issues and solutions to symbolically interpreting this text.

Avoiding the Name "Scapegoat"

This paper has attempted to minimize the usage of the term "scapegoat" only to the introductory section and generalized statements such as "the scapegoat ritual." This is because, as discussed below, the goat appears to be going to Azazel and is an entity separate from Azazel. Hence, for clarity's sake, this paper has preferred terms such as the "live goat" or the "second goat" when specifying which goat is being discussed.

Sadly, there is a tendency even among scholars to use the term "scapegoat" for the live goat that goes into the wilderness.³⁰ This problematic tendency seems to be the backbone of the history of merging the figures in one form or another, a history mixed with indecision. Going back to the Bible's earliest translations, Azazel was not assumed to be a proper noun.³¹ The Septuagint

³⁰ See e.g. Morales, *Mountain*, 178: "I will refer to the live goat by its traditional ascription 'scapegoat,' along with 'azazel goat.'"

³¹ See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, The Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1020.

led the way by loosely translating Azazel as *apopompen* (removing evil; 16:8, 10) and *aphesin* (release; 16:24). Following the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate continued the non-literal translation of Azazel, expanding the word into two—*capro* (goat) and *emissarius* (emissary)—to denote a sent-away goat. Continuing the Vulgate’s paradigm, Tyndale’s translation of Leviticus used the term “scapegoote,” giving us today’s “scapegoat.” Following Tyndale, English translators used his terminology to give us today’s “scapegoat” (KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV). This trend has prevailed in English translations, but in recent years, translators have moved toward the more accurate term Azazel (ESV, NET, NRSV). Because translators moved away from the term “scapegoat,” so did its etymological meaning. As it stands, there is no consensus regarding the etymological meaning of the name.³² Some patterns seem plausible, but “scapegoat” is unlikely and only leads to confusion.

The Second Goat Travels to Azazel

The Hebrew word for scapegoat, *la’aza’zel*, has a preposition prefixed on it. The preposition “la” is typically directional, generally meaning “to,” “toward,” or “for.”³³ Among scholarship, “‘To Azazel’ is the majority rendering.”³⁴ However, the term “la” has a wider semantic range and can be used in other ways. It can alternately be translated as “as” or “belonging to.” If the goat represents Azazel, the Adventist interpretation that the goat symbolizes Satan is

³² The uncertainty does not mean there is no meaning. One new interpretation may help resolve this issue. See Treiyer, *Judgment*, 242-244. As Treiyer writes, this following interpretation “is the most recent interpretation (1980), and it is favored by the largest body of biblical and extrabiblical evidences.” As he documents, the original name may have been spelled ‘azaz’el (עזזאל), not ‘aza’zel (עזאזל). ‘Azaz (עזז) means “strong” and ‘el (אל) means “God.” Its meaning could be along the lines of “God strengthens” or “fierce god.” This would fit well with the supernatural background of Azazel. Treiyer personally argues that the name could have compound meaning meant for describing several attributes, the she-goat *az* included. For additional information, see Jacqueline C.R. de Roo, “Was the Goat for Azazel Destined for the Wrath of God?” *Biblica* 81, no. 2 (2000), 233-242; As a final note, Gladson’s thesis, written in 1973, documents this theory, so this interpretation is older than Treiyer’s claim that 1980 is the year this theory originated. See Gladson, “Enigma,” 63-64, 95, 108.

³³ William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 168.

³⁴ Levy, *Symbolism*, 32.

eased. However, if the goat goes to Azazel, then the goat and Azazel would appear to be separate beings. Hence, interpreting the ritual to make the goat symbolize Satan becomes a lot more challenging. The simpler “as Azazel” interpretation has been held by Adventist scholars for a large amount of Adventism’s history.³⁵ However, recently, Adventist scholars have begun to cease their usage of such a translation; it is being accepted that the goat is sent “to Azazel,” according to the text. Why is this?

To the Hebrew eye, the immediate understanding of seeing *la* would be direction. That is well-affirmed in Judaism. In fact, in the Mishnah, it was understood that Azazel was a place, and the majority of Jewish commentaries since the Mishnah have recognized the same. The Jews understand “*la*” to be directional so much that they forget Azazel is a person. There are several reasons why this is the case:

(1) This directional nature is made evident throughout the rest of the Pentateuch. The word used here, which means “to send” (*shalach*), is a common word throughout the Bible. Sending is directional, and if we want to determine whether this is consistent, it would be good to see if the rest of Moses’s writings stay consistently directional. Searching for the words *shalach* (to send) and *la* (to, toward, for) together throughout the Pentateuch, we find that all the other examples of this combination are directional:³⁶

“Send me away to my master” (Genesis 24:54)

“So she sent and called to her younger son Jacob” (Genesis 27:42)

“It is a present sent to my lord Esau” (Genesis 32:18)

“For God sent me before you” (Genesis 45:5)

³⁵ E.g. Alberto R. Treiye, *The Day of Atonement and the Heavenly Judgment: From the Pentateuch to Revelation* (Siloam Springs: Creation Enterprises International, 1992), 45. Interestingly, he argues that the oldest Adventist tradition of calling Azazel a name is challenging to make. See pages 238-242. Hasel makes a similar argument and renders the translation “in lieu” of Azazel. See Gerhard Hasel, “Studies in Biblical Atonement II: The Day of Atonement,” in *The Sanctuary and the Atonement*, ed. Arnold V. Wallenkampf (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1981), 122-123.

³⁶ There are many other verses in the Pentateuch using the standalone preposition ‘*el*, and they are still directional: Ex. 3:10; Ex. 3:13; Ex. 3:14; Ex. 3:15; Ex. 3:16; Ex. 7:16; Num. 5:4; Num. 22:5; Num. 22:10; Num. 22:37; Num. 24:12.

“To his father he sent the following” (Genesis 45:23)
“Behold, I am going to send an angel before you” (Exodus 23:20)
“Balak sacrificed... and sent some to Balaam and to the leaders...” (Numbers 22:40)
“... From each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to war” (Numbers 31:4)

As seen, all of these examples directionally utilize *la*, not a representative way. (2) Aside from the evidence that *la* would have been directional in this context, Leviticus 16:10 holds is presented in a way that makes direction unavoidable:

The goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

The first half of this verse specifically identifies the second goat as having a relationship with Azazel. Since the goat’s identity has already been established, re-mentioning Azazel in the second half would be unlikely to relate to the goat’s identity. Considering that the second half of 16:10 is all directional, separating Azazel from the direction is difficult. Bearing that context, Azazel must be directional.

This idea is mirrored in Leviticus 16:26 when rendered directionally: “And he who lets the goat go to Azazel shall wash his clothes” (Lev. 16:26). If Azazel is a title or the goat is the representative, the writer could have simply said, “the one who released the scapegoat” or “the one who released the goat” instead of redundantly saying “the one who released the goat as the scapegoat” (NASB). Unless the passage is telling the reader that the man brought the goat to Azazel, this statement is quite unnecessary if no distinction is intended.

(3) The name Azazel also may provide evidence that the goat goes to Azazel. The name Azazel, like many other names, may have meaning behind it. The term “scapegoat” comes from an attempt to find the word’s meaning by splitting the word *‘aza’zel* (אזאזל) into separate roots. The roots could be *‘az* (אז), meaning “goat,” and *‘azel* (אזל) meaning “dismissal.” Hence, the

“escaping goat” or “scapegoat.” However, it should be noted that “רַע is a she-goat, not a he-goat.”³⁷ The ritual requires male goats (16:5). It would be strange for the story to be talking about “the [female] goat that is dismissed.” Rather, the fact that the goat is a female goat would indicate it is a goat unrelated to the ritual. Treiyer notes that “a considerable number of rustic deity-goats of Mesopotamia and Southwest Asia resembled also the ibex (wild she-goats) and goats in general, representing demons.”³⁸ Since the ‘az cannot be the ritual’s goat, associating it with one of the goat-demons found in the wilderness seems more suitable. Considering that Judaic literature describes Azazel as a demon confined in the wilderness (discussed below, it seems quite suitable that the ‘az in ‘aza’zel is pointing to Azazel being one of these wilderness goat-demons.³⁹ Since the goat is traveling in relation to a wilderness goat-demon, the goat is not a wilderness goat-demon, it seems logical that the goat is going into the wilderness to meet Azazel.

(4) By the logic of deduction, the description of Azazel’s responsibilities in 16:22 suggests that the goat is not going to the wilderness for himself. The goat is described as *nasa*’ing the iniquities placed on him. The word, often translated as “bear,” might be best translated in the more common, literal rendering meaning “to carry.” This is because the phrase ends with “to a remote area.” The idea of carrying sins to a remote location gives the notion that once out in the remote location, the goat will no longer carry the sins. If the sins are meant to be transferred eventually, it seems reasonable to expect that these sins are transferred to Azazel.

By the evidence available, it does not appear that the goat is standing in “as Azazel.” Rather, the live goat appears to be sent to Azazel. While the Adventist mass has caught up,

³⁷ Gladson, “Enigma,” 64.

³⁸ Treiyer, *Judgment*, 242.

³⁹ Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology: A Study of Jewish and Christian Doctrine, its Origins and Development* (London: Epworth Press, 1949), 131-32.

Adventist scholars readily recognize it. For example, the *Andrews Study Bible* supports this in Leviticus 16:10's footnote:

Or "to Azazel." Because the preposition following "let it go" actually means "to" rather than "as" in such a context, it does not make sense that the live goat would be sent to the "scapegoat." The live goat was to make "atonement" in the sense of carrying away the Israelites' sins, as a ritual garbage truck carrying poisonous waste, into the wilderness (vv. 21-22) to Azazel. This would not be a friendly move toward Azazel. The fact that God directed the Israelites to do this indicates that Azazel was His enemy, the evil source of their sins (compare Gen. 3; Rev. 12:9).⁴⁰

Likewise, Roy Gane spends time discussing the Israelites using the goat to return the sins to Azazel:

The high priest represents his people as a group of forgiven sinners by leaning his hands, not on Azazel himself, but on a "tote-goat" sent to him.⁴¹

While Adventist scholars do recognize Azazel as being out in the wilderness, the Adventist theology regarding the scapegoat ritual persuades them to believe that Satan is the goat. As such, it is typical to find these same Adventist scholars adding that the goat sent to Azazel symbolizes Azazel (or is his representative). While Gane does not confirm or deny this view in the book cited above, Gane notes elsewhere that: "The goat that belonged to Azazel and was sent to him must also represent Azazel."⁴²

Ángel Rodríguez, in the *Andrews Bible Commentary*, follows this dichotomy:

Verse 10 states that it was to be brought near the Lord first, then sent to Azazel, to the wilderness. The goat was not Azazel, but it was to be sent to him, and in a sense, it represented him who was already in the wilderness. At this point, no reason is given for sending the goat to him.⁴³

The most challenging case of this dichotomy is found in Davidson's work. He says the following:

Azazel's goat being led out into the wilderness is thus associated with the demonic powers represented by hairy goats. The Hebrew phrase *la'aza'zel* in Leviticus 16:10 is rendered by some versions that makes this

⁴⁰ Notes on Leviticus, *Andrews Study Bible*, NKJV, ed. Jon L. Dybdahl et al. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2010), Leviticus 16:10.

⁴¹ Gane, *Cult and Character*, 264. See 261-265 for the full discussion.

⁴² Roy Gane, *Altar Call* (Berrien Springs: Diadem, 1999), 250; Republished in Roy Gane, *The Sanctuary and Salvation: The Practical Significance of Christ's Sacrifice and Priesthood* (Madrid: Safeliz, 2019), 233.

⁴³ Rodríguez, "Leviticus," 263.

link even stronger: the live goat is not actually representing Azazel, but is to be “sent away into the wilderness to Azazel [*la'aza'zel*] to be let go” (ESV, NRSV). If this translation is correct, then Azazel is the goat-demon residing in the desert, and the live goat is sent away to him. There is a possibility that both truths may be correct: the live goat “stands for” or “represents” Azazel (*la'aza'zel*, Lev 16:8) and also is sent “to” Azazel (*la'aza'zel*, Lev. 16:9).⁴⁴

Davidson does this because there is value in both “to Azazel” and “for Azazel,” which together form the most holistic Adventist defense of the scapegoat ritual. Despite Davidson’s attempt, these two translations are not capable of being blended. Each has separate implications; either Azazel is the goat, or the goat travels to Azazel. As far as our current theology stands, Azazel cannot be sent to Azazel. While it may be possible that “for” in Lev. 16:8 implies possessiveness, there is no evidence that the goat could represent Azazel if he is going to him. If a proper interpretation is to be developed, regardless of which side one stands on, one must be willing to recognize that these ideas cannot be merged. There is no precedent for such an idea elsewhere in the Bible’s rituals. In all of the other sacrifices, the Bible does not attempt to say that an offering symbolizes or is standing in for the Lord. Generally, the rituals primarily focus on their purpose and the process of reaching their purpose. In no other ritual do people attempt to translate the verses as if YHWH or Azazel had animals standing in for them. The evidence in favor of each translation cannot be utilized if our goal is to convey one message.

To conclude, while some scholars attempt to translate *la'aza'zel* in Lev. 16:10 and 16:24 as “as Azazel,” the evidence does not favor this. *La* is typically a directional term, and verses that use *la* and *shalach* (to send) together consistently use it directionally. Moreover, Jewish tradition has understood this to the extent that Azazel has been misunderstood by many Jews to be a location. On top of that, the name Azazel itself would indicate that Azazel is an entity separate from the live goat and that the goat is being sent to it. The idea that the goat is being sent “to

⁴⁴ Davidson, *Song*, 331.

Azazel” is held among the majority of today’s scholars, both Evangelical and Adventist alike.⁴⁵ However, to sustain the current Adventist understanding of the ritual, many Adventist scholars go further than the text and say that the goat going to Azazel also represents Azazel. As discussed below, this is problematic. These considerations should be borne in mind when trying to understand the meaning of the rituals.

The Second Goat’s Ritual Involves Atoning Work

In Leviticus 16:33, we find a sequential, four-step list to atonement, highlighting the atonement of the [Most] Holy Place, the tent of meeting, the altar before the Lord, and a grouped atonement for the priesthood and the people. In the section of instruction (16:11-28), four distinct atonements are mentioned, and each of them is presented in the same sequence from 16:33. Similarly, 16:20 mentions the first three of the atonements. Because the fourth atonement had yet to happen, it is not mentioned in the verse. Likewise, 16:17 instructs that no one may enter the sanctuary from the beginning to the end of atonement and uses the same first and last atonements to describe the process. The following table outlines the four main atonements of their chapter and their summarized mentions:

Verses 11-28	Verse 33	Verse 20	Verse 17
1. Atonement for the Most Holy (11-16a)	“He shall make atonement for the holy sanctuary”	“And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place...”	No one may enter from the atoning of the Holy Place
2. (Assumed) Atonement for the tent of meeting (16:16b)	“And he shall make atonement for the tent of meeting”	“... and the tent of meeting...”	...

⁴⁵ For Adventists, e.g. Rodríguez, “Leviticus,” 263; Gane, *Cult and Character*, 264. For other scholars, see Levy’s survey in Levy, *Symbolism*, 32.

3. Atonement for the altar before the Lord (16:18-19)	“And for the altar”	“... and the altar...”	...
4. The burnt offerings “for himself and for the people (16:24)	“And he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly.”	...	Until he comes out and has made atonement for himself, his house, and the assembly”

The chapter shows careful observation in relaying each atonement that happens. There is, however, one unique exception to these atonements, and it is never mentioned in any of the verses of instruction or summary. In Leviticus 16:10, the text says that the goat is presented before the Lord *lekapper ‘alav*, which is translated as “to atone upon him/it” in its most literal form. This phrase has drawn much debate from commentators. How does a non-sacrificial rite serve as atonement? Atonement is regularly associated with blood (Lev. 17:11). Considering that, the idea that the non-sacrificial goat itself is being atoned for has been of concern. This goat should be perfect upon its presentation. It should not require atonement before taking on sin, and after sin is placed on it (16:21-22), an atonement (which would remove sin) would be counter-productive to sending the sin away. What then is the atonement happening here?

In a unique way, the Adventist church is not foreign to this issue. Bearing in mind the theological concerns with Satan receiving or doing atonement, some Adventist works of the 20th century have argued that the goat is neither atoned for nor does the atoning work.⁴⁶ However, now

⁴⁶ E.g. M. L. Andreasen, *The Sanctuary Service* (Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1947), chap. 14. His argument is oriented to a theological presentation of why Satan could not atone for us. He claims that since the goat’s blood finished the cleansing of the sanctuary, there should be no atonement afterwards. He fails to directly answer 16:10’s usage of atonement, and he furthermore ignores that atonement explicitly happens after the cleansing of the sanctuary in 16:24. See also Hasel, *Studies*, 121. Hasel does better than Andreasen and tries to answer the question of atonement

in the 21st century, the Adventist scholars in this field, Roy Gane and Ángel Rodríguez, have both recognized that this is not the case, and both take to the wider-held view that the goat is the agent of *kipper* (atonement).⁴⁷ While there is wide agreement (*kipper*) that the goat is related to atonement, the specifics of how this ritual classifies as *kipper* are debated.

Before discussing how *kipper* happens in the scapegoat ritual, we must ponder the question of what *kipper* specifically is and how it happens, for this itself influences how that *kipper* or atonement is seen in this ritual. Originally, the most basic understanding of atonement was that it meant “cover.” Today, however, “is almost certainly ‘wipe.’”⁴⁸ This wiping takes on a removal sense in ritual, leading Gilders and Gane to the conclusion that “effect removal”⁴⁹ should be atonement’s true meaning. The meaning of atonement is quite nuanced, and things that hold true in some places do not always in others.⁵⁰ Foundationally, blood manipulation, commonly associated with atonement because of Lev. 17:11, does not necessarily entail atonement. This is apparent for several reasons: (1) The first evidence for this is that sacrifice is not the only means to reach atonement.⁵¹ (2) In addition, different rituals can take different routes to reach

in 16:10. He argues that “no ritual atonement or expiation was executed on the scapegoat” but rather that “upon” might be translated as “‘beside it,’ or in proximity to it.” He does not conclude what atonement is happening in proximity to it. Milgrom vehemently refutes this view, saying, “there is no warrant whatever to read ‘al as ‘in proximity to’”. See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1023.

⁴⁷ See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 261-265; Rodríguez, “Leviticus,” 263.

⁴⁸ William Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Power* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 28.

⁴⁹ Gilders, *Blood*, 29; Roy Gane, “Sacrifice and the Old Testament,” in *St Andrews Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. by Brendan N. Wolfe et al. (2022): 13.

⁵⁰ Gane, “Sacrifice,” 9.

⁵¹ Some non-sacrificial rites aside from Lev. 16:10 serve as atonement. For example, 1 Sam. 3:14 says that because of the sins of Eli’s house, his “house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.” A distinction is made between sacrifice and non-sacrificial offerings, and each of them atones. Hence, non-sacrificial offerings are serving as atonement. See also Ezk. 45:17 and Isa. 6:6-7. Ezekiel 45:17 instructs that sin offerings, grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings be made to atone for the people. Grain offerings do not require sacrifice. Likewise, in Isa. 6:6-7, atonement for Isaiah’s iniquities is accomplished by placing burning coals against his lips, not sacrificial means.

atonement.⁵² Moreover, while two offerings can be identically carried out, they can have different results.⁵³ Bearing these considerations in mind, we should not assume that blood manipulation will result in atonement.⁵⁴ Rather than associating atonement with the process itself, it is better to associate *kipper* with the result. As F. Maass notes, “*kpr* pl. in the meaning “to atone” is always resultative in the OT.”⁵⁵ In addition, since forgiveness follows atonement in certain rites, it seems more desirable to associate it with something preceding reconciliation.⁵⁶ Since the options have been narrowed, the removal of a barrier between man and God seems to be the best understanding

⁵² E.g., the year-round offerings of Lev. 4-5:13 seem to atone by carrying contamination away from the sinner into the sanctuary. See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 163-181. Opposing this process, the sinless sacrifices on the Day of Atonement never take on sin are still capable of atoning for the sanctuary. Further, in Leviticus 10:17, we learn that priests can atone for people by eating offerings. Considering the different ways atonement is reached, we should not expect atonement to always conform to one shape.

⁵³ E.g., on the Day of Atonement, sprinkling blood on and around the mercy seat atones for the Holy Place. However, sprinkling blood on the altar of incense goes further, not only atoning but also consecrating it (Lev. 16:18-19).

⁵⁴ The reason for the misconception that blood is required originates from two verses. In Leviticus 17:11, a prohibition against eating blood, the Israelites were told, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.” In this context, it is true that atonement is made by blood. However, it is not the blood that results in atonement, but rather that you make “atonement by the life” inside the blood. Life is the condition for atonement. As such, while blood may be the simplest means to atonement, if there is life, other means may be available. The other verse one might highlight is Hebrews 9:22: “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” It is important to recognize that the writer here does not use the Greek word for atonement, *hilasterion*. The writer uses the word for forgiveness, *aphesis*. Hebrews’ writer is completely correct in that sense. The sin and guilt offerings where forgiveness is mentioned all include shedding of blood. Because the writer of Hebrews is not referencing atonement, this verse is not capable of supplying any support for this conception. Further disqualifying this verse, while some might assume that the second half of 9:22 is formulaic, it should be noted that the first half of the verse is an observation of data. As such the second half is more likely a statement based on observations. Since 23’s statement says, “thus it was necessary...” and hence grounds its data on the observations, the demand for purification via blood is based on generalized patterns. He does not assume that the nuanced exceptions matter. Unlike him, we today recognize that the law is nuanced, and those exceptions have a rationale behind them. Because the writer of Hebrews has not contemplated this, using this 9:22 in this conversation holds diminishing value.

⁵⁵ F. Maass, “כפר *Kpr* Pi. to Atone” in *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, ed. Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 2:626; C.f. Gane, *Cult and Character*, 192.

⁵⁶ In determining the meaning of *kipper*, attention should be set on the results of the ritual, not the conditions the ritual prescribes. Immediately, one might assume that *kipper* might be reconciliation or the traditional “at-one-ment” which most people recognize. While it might be convenient, using the phrase to imply the modern meaning “at-one-ment” or reconciliation might not be suitable. Reconciliation appears to be a natural result of *kipper*; the actual event of *kipper* is not the reconciliation itself. “This is supported by the fact that in a purification or reparation offering, כפר performed by a priest is followed by divine forgiveness, expressed by the *nip’al* of סלח (Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, etc.; 5:16, 16, 26[6:7]; 19:22).” See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 194.

available. In a ritual sense, the barrier between man and God is sin. With that in mind, the transfer of sin or its expiation appears to be reasonable language to use when referring to atonement.⁵⁷

This expiation of sin is especially stressed on the Day of Atonement. Throughout the year, the purification offerings expiated sins from the sinner onto sacrificial offerings, serving as atonement for the people (Lev. 4-5:13). Then, on the Day of Atonement, sin is expelled from the sanctuary. Starting in the Most Holy, the high priest sequentially moves outward. From there, the scapegoat and burnt offering rites expel the sins and impurities.⁵⁸ Hence, we can find an expiation or removal of sin standing behind every atoning ritual. This expiation stands as the basis for what is happening in Lev. 16:10. With the understanding that atonement is expiation, there appear to be two main ways in which the goat may atone.

The first view is that the courtyard scene serves as atonement by moving sins onto the goat. Lev. 16:10 sequentially instructs to present the goat before the Lord, atone, and send it into the wilderness. Likewise, in Leviticus 16:20-22, we see that the goat is presented alive (20), sin is placed on it (21a), and is sent into the wilderness (21b-22). Back in 16:10, a word bridges the atonement and departure: *leshalach* (to send). In other words, atonement is made “to send” the goat to Azazel. As such, it may be that the atonement precedes the dispatching. This means that

⁵⁷ E.g., in Isaiah 28:18, a promise is made that Israel’s leaders’ covenant with death would be “annulled” (Heb: *kuppar*) and those leaders would be subject to death. In other words, the wedge stopping them from facing death was removed. Likewise, Roy Gane notes that Gen. 32:21[20]’s non-ritual usage of the term *kipper* takes a meaning focused on removing the wedge between the brothers. He does this by sending a gift ahead of the caravan. See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 194-195. Isaiah 59:2 claims that the barrier between us and God are sins. In the Hebrew cultus, this seems to be the barrier that atonement removes. Leviticus 10:17 poignantly reveals this. Uniquely, eating the sin offering serves as atonement. How does it do this? As the center of the verse says, eating the sin offering transfers the sins onto the High Priest. The clause ending the verse serves as an explanation, implying that bearing iniquity is atonement for the people. Hence, a substitute bearing sin is the way “to make atonement for them.” Another notable example of atonement as a removal of sin is Isaiah 27:9. Here, atonement and removal of sin are stated in parallelism. The sin-inducing barrier are the altars and Asherim figures which take man’s attention away from God. By destroying them, the wedge is removed. Based on these verses and others, it is evident that a removal of sin is the most suitable understanding for atonement in a ritual context.⁵⁷

⁵⁸ See Gane, *Cult and Character*, 194.

the atonement would be in the courtyard, implying that the transfer of sin onto the goat must be the atonement. Bringing the volatile sins out of limbo would stop them from re-contaminating any object or entity. Hence, this is the moment at which an uninterrupted relationship between man and God is accomplished. This would be a strong fulfillment of reconciliatory atonement.

Under the assumption that this atonement happens in the courtyard, the understanding of 16:10 becomes much more nuanced and influences how one should render ‘*alav*. The word’s root is ‘*al*, most commonly meaning upon, above, or over.⁵⁹ It is suffixed with the 3mp pronoun (*av*), translating to “him/it.” If Aaron is the one needing atonement, using the simplest translation of “to atone upon him” might be a suitable rendering of *lekapper ‘alav*. N. Kiuchi has stood as one of the main proponents that the priest is referred to in ‘*al*.⁶⁰ He argues that while it may be the most theologically unique, this view stands as the simplest explanation of what is happening. *Kipper ‘al* is used in other instances to mean “atonement on behalf of,” and something similar may be happening here. Kiuchi argues that when atonement was being made by the high priest in the sancta, the high priest served as a substitutionary vessel for atonement, similar to how Moses commanded the priesthood to eat the sin offering as a means of atonement (Lev. 10:17).⁶¹ Bearing in mind the idea that sin is being transferred from priest to goat, the ritual would atone for the priest. As such, *lekapper ‘alav* in 16:10 would be translated as “atone for/on behalf of him [Aaron].”

⁵⁹ Holladay, *Hebrew Lexicon*, 271.

⁶⁰ See Nobuyoshi Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature: Its Meaning and Function* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1987), 151. See also Jay Sklar, *Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, and Atonement*, (PhD Diss. Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education, 2001), 96-98.

⁶¹ Kiuchi also notes that his case is not made invalid on the counterargument that Lev. 16:21-22 does not say the priest’s sins transferred onto the goat. He explains that the usage of “assembly of Israel” in Lev. 16:19 includes the priesthood since bull blood (which is used for the priesthood, c.f. Lev. 16:3, 5) is used just like goat blood (16:18). In the same way, vs. 20’s usage of the phrase should include priestly sins as well. See Kiuchi, *Purification*, 152.

While this might present the simplest way to understand the ritual, Kiuchi's view fails to consider the syntax of verse 10. Both Gane and Milgrom argue that this interpretation syntactically does not make sense.⁶² Resting on v. 10 alone, several indicators suggest that *'alav* is referring to the goat. First, the rest of the attention of 16:10 is on the goat. The word "be presented" has a 3ms case (him/it), just like *'alav*. This verb uses the *huf'al* stem, meaning the word should be translated as "he/it will be presented," not "he will present." This shows that the goat is the subject of this action, not the priest. Similarly, we are also told that this rite is done "to send *'oto* (him/it) into the wilderness to Azazel." The priest does not travel into the wilderness. Only the goat does. Bearing these features in mind, there is not any context permitting *'alav* to be talking about Aaron.

A simpler understanding of atonement in 16:10 may be found if 16:10 is understood as a multifold removal of sin ending in giving the sins to Azazel. Roy Gane argues that "to atone" and "to send" in 16:10 form a parallelism (CSB, NET, NKJV).⁶³ Hence, the act of sending away is atonement. The expiation, the removal of sin from the camp, serves to completely absolve the sin that would otherwise contaminate man or God's sanctuary. This ends when sins are dropped off with Azazel.

As highlighted above, v. 22 appears to say that the sins have a destination. Supporting this, the term "remote area" in 16:22's phrase "bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area" would imply that the remote area is sin's drop-off location. Rodriguez notes that *nasa* (to bear) "does not mean to accept responsibility" but "means to take something from one place to another, to transfer something."⁶⁴ In this context, it might be suitable to translate *nasa* more literally as "carry." Since

⁶² Gane, *Cult and Character*, 261; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1023.

⁶³ Gane, *Cult and Character*, 261.

⁶⁴ Rodriguez, "Leviticus," 264.

“to send” refers to the goat and *av* in *‘alav* should as well, the priest cannot be the one receiving atonement.

Considering that sending the goat is the only portion possibly classified as an atonement, the actual transfer of sin to Azazel should not be classified as an atonement but as a conclusion to the atonement. Likewise, placing sins on the goat serves as a conclusion to removing sins from the sanctuary. As noted above, reconciliation is a tail-end effect of atonement, and in both cases, the atoning conclusions bring reconciliation. In the first atonement, sins are de-volatilized. Sins no longer rest on God, man, or between their presence. Sins no longer form a separation between man and God. As for the dismissal atonement, dropping off sin with Azazel would “purge a threat to moral cleansing” by “sever[ing] the people’s tie to Azazel,” the source of all sin (see parallels of Azazel to Satan below).⁶⁵

Because the goat is sinless and should not need atonement for its lack of sins, *‘al* must be used in a sense not demanding the sin be atoned. Milgrom notes that “There is no warrant whatever to read *‘al* as “in proximity to” considering that all other instances of *‘al* in an atonement context mean, “for,” “on behalf of,” or “upon” when the referring to an inanimate object.⁶⁶ The remaining understanding would be that atonement is accomplished through the goat. Hence, a suitable rendering of *‘alav* might be “because of it,” or “upon it” in the sense that atoning rites are being performed upon/via it, not that the goat is being atoned for.⁶⁷ Aside from Kiuchi’s view, those who hold that the atonement mentioned in 16:10 is in the courtyard would hold a similar rendering using “because” and “upon” since both require *av* to refer to the goat, not making the goat the

⁶⁵ Gane, *Cult and Character*, 265. While this view seems more reasonable, a concern with this view is that the laying of sin is not an explicit part of the text and must be assumed to be implied by “presented alive before the Lord.” Otherwise, the text says that Aaron presents the goat before the Lord and skips to sending it.

⁶⁶ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1023.

⁶⁷ Holladay, *Hebrew Lexicon*, 272.

recipient of atonement. As such, 16:10's *lekapper 'alav* should read, "to make atonement upon it" in the sense of atonement rites, not atonement directed at the goat.

Not only is this a sound theory in a ritual sense, but this understanding also holds theological value that will help unveil the scapegoat ritual's fulfillment below. The fact that the live goat is atoning, the idea that the journey is an atonement, and the fact that the transfers of sin onto the goat and Satan are not listed as separate atonements (and are only completions of atonement) will all play valuable roles once we discuss what this ritual fulfills.

Satan is Azazel

With the understanding that Azazel is not the goat but rather an entity of the wilderness, uncovering the identity of the entity is required. "Azazel" itself has a background suitably fitting a demonic being. Aside from biblical and extrabiblical support, Christian writers were not mute about the identity of Azazel. As far back as Origen, people have associated Azazel with Satan.⁶⁸ However, one longstanding Jewish tradition is that Azazel is a location.⁶⁹ Even so, today's Jewish scholars (along with Christian counterparts) recognize Azazel to be a demon.⁷⁰ There are several reasons for this.

First, Azazel is presented as juxtaposed with the Lord. In Leviticus 16:8, a contrast is made between the figures when determining the selection of the two male goats. It reads, "One for the Lord and the other for Azazel." Further force is given to this argument since the text reads in grammatical parallel. "The symmetry in the expression 'for [to, v 10] Yahweh' and 'for [to, v10] Azazel'" favors the idea that Azazel is a personal being in contrast to YHWH.⁷¹ If Azazel was

⁶⁸ See Gladson, "Enigma," 112.

⁶⁹ See Gladson, "Enigma," 65-73

⁷⁰ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1020-1021; Baruch Levine, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Leviticus* (The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 102, 251.

⁷¹ Hasel, *Studies* 122.

simply a place's name, if the deepest meaning of the narrative was simply to go into the wilderness, then it would make more sense for the account to read "One for the lord and the other for the wilderness." From the way the passage is presented, there is almost an antagonism between the Lord and Azazel. It would make much more sense for a personal being to be compared to a personal living being, and if there is anybody to stand against God, it is Satan.

Second, all of the early literature available refers to Azazel as a personal being. As we will further discuss, this being is not seen as any human figure; this being is a demonic figure. In addition, several features of Azazel in early literature link Satan to Azazel and vice versa. Additionally, it is staunchly apparent from the context of Leviticus 16 that Azazel is a goat-demon from the wilderness.

Azazel is mentioned only four times in the Bible, all in Lev. 16. As such, investigating external sources is critical in identifying the identity of Azazel. Supplementing it, 1 Enoch serves as our oldest and largest source of the name Azazel outside of the Bible. The book is a collection of two traditions of angelic rebellions that were compiled from different sources over several centuries.⁷² One of those is the rebellion of Asael/Azazel by revealing hidden knowledge. Chapter 10, found in the sub-section titled The Book of Watchers (chs. 6-36), "probably took its present form by the mid- or late third century B.C.E."⁷³ This book is important because it holds our oldest record of Azazel outside of the Bible's four mentions in Lev. 16 and provides us with many features that both certify the link between Leviticus and 1 Enoch and link Azazel to Satan.

In the newest translations available, Asael is used rather than Azazel. There still stands debate on whether the original text said Asael or Azazel, but the stronger view is that the original

⁷² Archie Wright, "Breaching the Cosmic Order: The Biblical Tradition of Genesis 6:1-4 and its Reception in Early Enochic and Philonic Judaism" (PhD diss, University of Durham, 2005), 114.

⁷³ E. Isaac, "1 Enoch" in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 7.

text said Asael. There stands some textual evidence that Azazel was part of the original tradition, but there is not little information to rely on.⁷⁴ Moreover, based on the textual similarity of the names and parallels to Lev. 16 discussed below, it is evident that the text had the same figure in mind. In addition, later portions of Enoch, which date closer to the turn of the era (e.g., 1 En. 55:4), use the name Azazel rather than Asael, indicating they were understood to be the same being.⁷⁵

In 1 Enoch 8, Asael is portrayed as a demonic being introducing different ungodly ways to mankind:

Asael taught men to make swords of iron and weapons and shields and breastplates and every instrument of war. He showed them metals of the earth and how they should work gold to fashion it suitably, and concerning silver, to fashion it for bracelets and ornaments for women. And he showed them concerning antimony and eye paint and all manner of precious stones and dyes. And the sons of men made them for themselves and for their daughters, and they transgressed and led the holy ones astray. And there was much godlessness on the earth, and they made their ways desolate.⁷⁶

While we today may have some concerns with metalworking and jewelry, it appears the impact these things had during that time was much more significant. This concept is possibly reflected in Genesis 4:21-22, for Cain's "ungodly" lineage was the progenitors of metal forgery and music. Asael was destined to face consequences for his actions. After God saw all that Asael had done, God commanded Raphael to carry out a specific judgment against Asael:

Bind Asael hand and foot, and cast him into the darkness; And make an opening in the wilderness that is in Doudael. Throw him there, and lay beneath him sharp and jagged stones. And cover him with darkness, and let him dwell there for an exceedingly long time. Cover up his face, and let him not see the light. And on the day of the great judgment, he will be led away to the burning conflagration. And heal the earth, which the watchers have desolated; and announce the healing of the earth, that the plague may be healed, and all the sons of men may not perish because of the mystery that the watchers told and taught their sons. And all the earth was made desolate by the deeds of the teaching of Asael, and over him write all the sins." (1 En. 10:4-8)

⁷⁴ Wright, *Breaching Cosmic*, 116-128.

⁷⁵ C.f. George Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1-36; 81-108*, ed. Klaus Baltzer (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 180.

⁷⁶ 1 Enoch 8:1-2. Citations of 1 Enoch are based on the Hermeneia Translation.

The judgment carried out on Asael is quite like Satan’s end-time judgment in Revelation

20. The number of parallels suggests that there is a relationship between the two:⁷⁷

I. Both direct their punishments toward fallen angels known for the perversion of mankind by knowledge	
Asael taught mankind hidden knowledge, bringing godlessness and corruption (1 En. 8); Also named Satan in later Enoch (1 En. 54:4-6).	Satan, the father of lies (Jn 8:44) and the serpent of old (Rev. 20:2) who tempted man into having knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:1-5)
II. Both have an angel commissioned to imprison	
“Go, Raphael, and bind Asael” 1 En. 10:4	“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain.” Rev. 20:1
III. Both fallen angels are bound	
“Bind Asael hand and foot,” 1 En. 10:4	“He seized the dragon... and bound him for a thousand years,” Rev. 20:2
IV. Both have a pit prepared for their imprisonment	
“And cast him into the darkness; And make an opening in the wilderness that is in Doudael.” 1 En. 10:4	“And [an angel] threw him into the pit,” Revelation 20:3
V. Both are sealed in a pit.	
“And cover him with darkness... Cover up his face, and let him not see the light.” 1 En. 10:5 ⁷⁸	“And shut it and sealed it over him” Revelation 20:3
VI. Both serve a long imprisonment.	
“Let him dwell there for an exceedingly long time.” 1 En. 10:5	“And [an angel] bound him for a thousand years” Rev. 20:2
VII. Both are singled out and incinerated on judgment day.	
“And on the day of the great judgment, he will be led away to the burning conflagration.” 1 En. 10:6	“And the devil who had deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and sulfur” Rev. 20:10
VIII. Both imprisonments of the fallen angels serve as a means to withhold knowledge-based corruption.	
“All the sons of men may not perish because of the mystery that the watchers told and taught their sons.” 1 En. 10:7	“So that he might not deceive the nations any longer” Rev. 20:3

⁷⁷ Every action imposed on Satan in Revelation 20:1-3 is prefigured here in 1 Enoch, 300 years or more before Revelation was written. Bearing that in mind, it is possible John either was citing Enoch or similar visions were revealed to separate people. While the matter of “inspiration” is up for the reader to decide, it seems reasonable to consider this passage as more trustworthy in discussing the scapegoat ritual. Because Enoch is not a single-source text, this portion must be studied in isolation and should not encourage readers to not view any other part of Enoch as having greater validity unless it can be directly compared to the Bible.

⁷⁸ In Coptic translations, v. 5 further reads, “And place upon him rough and jagged rocks” (E. Isaac’s translation). This further fits the context of being sealed.

1 Enoch should not be considered an inspired book,⁷⁹ but the evidence above suggests John was adapting this passage in his work and hence found some light in it. The parallels and implications of this passage are striking. Through biblical study, Adventists have recognized that the cleansing of the sanctuary ends at the second coming. From there, Adventists have fairly assumed that the events following the sanctuary's atonement are related to the millennium. With 1 Enoch, Adventists can move from assumptions into evidence. Within the millennium, we see Satan locked up in the cosmic "wilderness," the bottomless pit, parallel to 1 Enoch's imprisonment of Azazel.⁸⁰ From 1 Enoch, the argument may be made that the earliest Jewish records of Azazel paint his imprisonment as happening during the millennium and that Azazel is Satan. Moreover, since John seemed to find some light in it, this passage may be viewed as a stronger piece of evidence (though not directly inspired).

Among the different extrabiblical sources for Azazel, the plethora of specific details and the fact that it is our oldest record of Azazel outside the Bible (and that Adventist views are supported by it) make 1 Enoch an invaluable source for understanding Azazel better. While a name might serve as evidence that the scapegoat ritual and 1 Enoch are connected, having further evidence that 1 Enoch and Leviticus 16 are connected is desired. Let us recall 1 Enoch 10:4: "And make an opening in the wilderness that is in Doudael." This site, Doudael, is of notable importance when compared with the Mishnah. The Mishnah's tractate Yoma recounts the Jewish tradition of the scapegoat ritual. In particular, the text informs the reader of a location for the ritual: "From Jerusalem to Beit Hiddudo, the edge of the wilderness, where the mitzva of dispatching the goat

⁷⁹ This is in consideration of the fact that the book is constructed of two oral myths compiled and merged several times over several centuries. 1 Enoch shows clear evidence that the two myths changed with the progression of time, so while the source could have been inspired, its transmission in 1 Enoch cannot be inspired in the same sense.

⁸⁰ See Davidson, *Song*, 330.

was performed, was a distance of three mil” (Yoma 6:8). The textual similarity between Beit Hiddudo and Doudael is evident, and scholars have regarded the similarity as “too close to be accidental.”⁸¹ Considering similarities between these wilderness locations identified as “doo-da-el” and “hi-doo-do,” it is believed that Doudael is a textual variant of Beit Hiddudo.⁸²

While less clear, the statement “over him write all the sins” (1 En. 10:8) continues the link to Leviticus. Whether or not Azazel is the goat or already in the wilderness, Azazel is sent sin in Lev. 16’s context. In 1 Enoch’s presentation, the sins are not placed on Asael but ascribed to him. Satan’s actions are the source of all sin in the Bible, just like Azazel in 1 Enoch: “The whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel” (1 En. 10:8-9). Though he is viewed as the source of all sins here and punished because of it, the text does not tell us that he bears sins like the goat. Whether this matches the delivery of sin to Azazel in the wilderness or the placing of sin on the goat (meaning the goat is Azazel), this information alone is not able to determine which one it is. In addition to the link this makes to Leviticus, the parallels of Revelation to 1 Enoch support the idea that Satan is to be guilty of all sins, and one of his punishments in Revelation 20 is intended to reveal that. As to be discussed towards this paper’s end, death makes the most sense.

In the Talmud, it is mentioned that ‘The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Azazel is so called because it atones for the actions of Uzza and Azael. These are the names of “sons of God” who sinned with “daughters of men” (Genesis 6:2) and thereby caused the world to sin during the

⁸¹ Gladson, “Enigma,” 104.

⁸² For textual studies, see Lester Grabbe, “The Scapegoat Tradition: A Study in Early Jewish Interpretation,” in *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 18, no. 2 (1987): 154n6; Paul Hanson, “Rebellion in Heaven, Azazel, and Euhemeristic Heroes in 1 Enoch 6-11,” in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 96, no. 2 (1977): 222-224; Other mentions of this include Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1021; Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1*, 222. Robert Helm, “Azazel in Early Jewish Tradition,” in *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 32, no. 3 (1994), 226; G. R. Driver, “Three Technical Terms in the Pentateuch,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 1, no. 2 (1956): 97; R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, ed. R. H. Charles (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 193n10:4.

generation of the Flood.’⁸³ The two traditions merged in 1 Enoch—Azael’s (Azazel) rebellion by revealing secrets and Uza’s (Semyaza) rebellion by the fornication of angels and women—find themselves reinforced in the Talmud, attesting to the idea that the myths were well-known and associated with the Day of Atonement.

The Apocalypse of Abraham, like 1 Enoch, links Azazel to Satan.⁸⁴ In chapter 23, Azazel is described as the serpent in Eden. In 13:7-11, he is described as the instigator of sin. Langton describes Azazel in the Apocalypse of Abraham as a demon in the wilderness, the leader of the fallen angels, and represented by the serpent, hell, and the ruler of this world.⁸⁵ However, the information dates to a later date (1st or 2nd cent. A.D.) and is not as substantial as 1 Enoch.

The association of Azazel with demons in the wilderness is of particular importance to understanding why the goat was going into the wilderness. This is because Azazel may have been among a group of demons known as the se’irim. As discussed above, the meaning of the name “Azazel” may include she-goats, an animal class that is closely associated with the se’irim.⁸⁶ These demons are closely tied to the Israelites. Only a page after Leviticus 16, in Leviticus 17:7, God tells the Israelites to stop sacrificing to goat-demons:

So they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices to goat-demons (se’irim), after whom they whore.

This is the primary interaction between these demons and the Israelites. However, it is not the only time they are mentioned. In Isaiah 13, describing the demise of Babylon, the se’irim are once more encountered in its rubble:

⁸³ Yoma 67b:7.

⁸⁴ See Gladson, *Enigma*, 104-106. See also Shea, “Pseudepigrapha,” 6-8.

⁸⁵ Langton, *Essentials*, 131-32.

⁸⁶ Treiyer, *Judgment*, 242.

But wild beasts shall rest there; and the houses shall be filled with howling; and monsters shall rest there, and devils (se'irim) shall dance there. (Isaiah 13:21, LXX)⁸⁷

As has been seen in the last two passages, the se'irim were goat deities that situated themselves in the wilderness. This is further observed in Isaiah 32:

For it is the day of judgment of the Lord, and the year of the recompense of Zion in judgment... it shall be made desolate throughout her generations... satyrs (se'irim) shall dwell in it. (Isaiah 34:8-11, LXX)

With that in mind, we can see Satan as the leader of this banished group of demons. It is not only the Israelites, surprisingly, that were knowledgeable of Azazel and goat deities. Outside of Judeo-Christian culture, Azazel is not foreign. In Greek, Roman, and even modern mythology, goat-demons exist. The most well-known example is the Greco-Roman Satyrs, specifically the god Pan. When Christ claimed the words “the gates of hell shall not prevail” in Matthew 16:18, he was in Caesarea Philippi, a remote place where a cave poured out water from a spring, which was considered an entrance to hell. The chief god of this region was Pan, a deity whose form may be just like Satan’s.⁸⁸ With Azazel, “the parallels with the Greek pan and satyrs are very well known, and may now be supplemented by reference to a number of Southwest-Asiatic goat deities.”⁸⁹ Within Arabic culture, Azazel and Satan seem to be interchangeable once again. “It is known, for example, that among the Arabs there was a story to the effect that Azazil (the devil) was expelled from Eden for his refusal to prostrate himself before Adam when God commanded him. Now he commands a numerous and terrible demonic host, intent on leading men astray.”⁹⁰ The following

⁸⁷ Brenton’s Septuagint translation is used for LXX citations. Not all English translations take a mythological translation. Se’irim is simply plural of se’ir (goat), and to keep it literal, many translations stick with “goats.” While many modern translations use literal terminology, the background of Lev. 17:7 regarding sacrificing to goats and the history of mythological interpretation has led the majority of scholars discussing Azazel and his posse to go beyond literal meaning and assume these beings are supernatural in nature. For a survey of translations, see Peter Atkins, “Mythology or Zoology: A Study on the Impact of Translation History in Isaiah 13:21,” *Biblical Interpretation* 24, no. 1 (2016): 48-59.

⁸⁸ One cannot help but realize the immensity of Christ’s claim against Satan as he stood in the kitchen of Satan’s spiritual territory.

⁸⁹ William F. Albright, “The High Place in Ancient Palestine,” *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum* 4, no. 1 (1957): 245. Additionally, he shares the opinion that the se’irim and Azazel are inseparable.

⁹⁰ Gladson, “Enigma,” 111.

is anecdotal, but if these instances go beyond myth and legend, we have goat-demons even today. Throughout the music industry, the goat is used in reference to Satanic worship. Moreover, the only figure associated with the Church of Satan is Baphomet, a figure with a human torso but with the head and legs of a goat. While the church will not claim the figure of Baphomet is Satan, the link between the two is inescapable.⁹¹

Whether it be Jewish literature, Greek mythology, or Christian writings, evidence for Satan being Azazel is prevalent, and the mass of evidence supporting this interpretation certifies the strength of this argument. While Satan may be the most suitable identity of Azazel and early literature indicates the scapegoat ritual is associated with the millennium, that does not prove any theory is correct. There is a need to evaluate the different views on the ritual.

Issues with Interpretation

Issues with Evangelical Views

Regardless of which theological persuasion one is, there are currently many issues plaguing the prominent Evangelical and Adventist perspectives. The current Evangelical interpretations of the scapegoat ritual fail in highly demanding ways that leave their interpretations up for quick dismissal.⁹²

Beyond the weight of evidence against each symbol, the most evident reason for dismissing Evangelical rituals is the timing. Evangelicals come to Lev. 16 with an at-the-cross mentality and do not look much further than the cross to understand what is going on. However, it is apparent that 1 Enoch, our oldest record of Azazel outside the Bible, associates the ritual with Satan's confinement, which happens during the millennium. Adventists have understood the cleansing of

⁹¹ For a history of Baphomet, see Julian Strube, 'The "Baphomet" of Eliphas Levi: Its Meaning and Historical Context,' *Correspondences* 4, no. 1 (2016): 37-79.

⁹² For a summary of these interpretations, see Gladson, "Enigma," 74-87; Moscike, "Jesus as Goat," 59-85.

the sanctuary as happening before the return of Christ, so the scapegoat ritual logically shouldn't precede that. It should behoove Evangelicals to further consider if at-the-cross interpretations are correct.

Some scholars have associated the two goats of Lev. 16 with the ritual of two birds for cleansing lepers in Lev. 14. As some have suggested, "Just as there one of the birds is set free to fly over the field, so here too the goat of Azazel was sent into the wilderness."⁹³ In the ritual of cleansing lepers, we see one bird die. The blood of that bird is transferred to the second bird before being released. In both, the first animal dies, and the second animal is released. It has been concluded that this ritual points to Christ's death and resurrection. The fact that blood, the source of life (Lev. 17:11), is being transferred to the second bird is viewed as a determining factor that links the two rituals and highlights Christ's resurrection. This serves as an issue. If the ritual of the live goat were to be associated with the resurrection of Christ, we are struck by the issue that no blood was used to symbolize resurrection.⁹⁴ This opinion is unlikely.

Another interpretation of the ritual is that it was fulfilled by Christ's 40 days in the wilderness where he confronts Satan. This also seems unlikely. While the people and place may match the ritual, everything else does not. Atonement is not made through this ritual; the ritual was supposed to occur after Christ's death, and there is no evidence Christ was bearing sin.

The ritual is also associated with the Passion of Christ. The selection between Christ and Barabbas in Pilate's Hall might relate to the selection of the two goats. The first goat points to Christ since he dies and the second points to Barabbas since he is set free. This example is challenged by the same issues as the interpretation of Christ in the wilderness. There is no clear

⁹³ Ahituv Shmuel, "Azazel," in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 3:1002. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971.

⁹⁴ Davidson, *Song*, 275, 331.

explanation as to why atonement is made using the second goat in this context, and Barabbas as a sinful, tainted being is not positioned in a place capable of bearing the sins of the people. Moreover, the reason that the goat is released into the wilderness is unaccounted for. If this pointed to Barabbas, returning the goat to the congregation may have served to complete the ritual.

The Apostles' Creed says that Christ descended to hell, and some have speculated that this fulfilled the atonement of the scapegoat ritual.⁹⁵ 1 Peter 3:18-20 tells of Christ as proclaiming to spirits in prison after being made alive in the spirit, which has been taken to mean that Christ went and proclaimed to demons in hell. Using this evangelical mindset, this is probably the best evangelical explanation available for Leviticus 16. The wilderness connections with the spiritual prison and the demonic presence in both parallel well. In addition, this ritual happens after Christ's resurrection, as would be expected since the sinless goat dies beforehand. Despite the suitability, several clear issues exist surrounding this interpretation. Setting aside issues with hell and imprisoned spirits,⁹⁶ there is no evidence of anything other than "proclaiming" happening, and certainly not transferring sin. True repayment of sin is only brought at the judgment scenes (Rev. 18:4-9). These completions of the ritual are lackluster.

Issues with the Adventist View

While it is the wish of all Adventists to have all their theology right, there are inevitably going to be debates and questions raised about Adventist theology that make us reconsider our beliefs. In the case of the symbolic scapegoat ritual, there are a handful of challenging issues that current Adventist scholarship has yet to address.

⁹⁵ E.g. Morales, *Mountain*, 243; "Selection of the goats (16:6-10)," in *Asbury Bible Commentary*, ed. Eugene Carpenter and Wayne McCown (Zondervan, 1992). <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/asbury-bible-commentary/1-selection-of-the-goats-16-6-10>

⁹⁶ Kim Papaioannou, "1 Peter" in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel M Rodríguez, et al. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2020), 1884-1886.

First, utilizing modern scholarship, two different interpretations of the text are used, one for reading the text and another for identifying the symbolism of the ritual. In other words, while the text says one thing, the interpretation we utilize seems to translate it differently. According to Adventist experts in Leviticus, the goat is sent *to* Azazel.⁹⁷ However, when determining the antitype of the ritual, this understanding is set aside, and we return to the old translation that the goat represents Azazel. Adventist scholars present this argument by claiming that the goat going to Azazel must also represent him.⁹⁸ However, this does not answer the question of why Azazel is already out in the wilderness. The fact that Azazel is already out in the wilderness is a noteworthy feature that needs to be rationalized.

When O. R. L. Crosier originally brought forth this theory, he understood that Azazel was the name of the goat.⁹⁹ Today, that is not accepted.¹⁰⁰ However, in his time, he was taking the text literally and did not attempt to discount what the text actually said. Now that our understanding of how to translate Lev. 16 has further developed in this age, we need to represent our interpretation in a way that does not discount what the text says. If the current Adventist view were to be properly upheld with today's current knowledge, Azazel must be the goat traveling to the wilderness and the goat-demon already in the wilderness. This must be done not only in a textual way but also in a symbolic way. The current issue with doing so is explaining how Azazel would travel to Azazel.

Then-Adventist Jerry Gladson, surveying interpretations of this passage, notes,

The goat cannot be named Azazel if it is to go to Azazel. That is the same as saying "Send the scapegoat to the scapegoat." In other words, it does not seem logical that Azazel would stand for the goat which itself is a part of the ritual of purification of the people if the same goat is to be sent to Azazel. While it is clear that the goat for Azazel participates with the Lord's goat in the carrying out of the total ritual, it is not at all apparent that the word Azazel signifies the same, as this theory seems to demand.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Gane, *Cult and Character*, 261-265; Rodríguez, "Leviticus," 263.

⁹⁸ E.g. Davidson, *Song*, 330-331.

⁹⁹ Crosier, "Moses," 43.9.

¹⁰⁰ For issues with this rendering, see Gladson, *Enigma*, 62-64.

¹⁰¹ Gladson, "Enigma," 63.

Sending Azazel to Azazel stands as a glaring issue for concluding that the goat and Azazel are the same beings. As noted by Gladson, sending Azazel to Azazel seems illogical. Rather, it seems natural to demand they be separate beings. Since the actual Azazel is already in the wilderness, the goat going to him would not represent the actual Azazel but could symbolize an ambassador serving as Azazel's representative. Without compromising the text, this seems to be the largest claim that could be made. If the live goat is only an ambassador to Azazel textually, then this would be demanded symbolically as well. This means the live goat could not be Satan symbolically. The live goat could symbolize a representative of Satan, perhaps a demon. Yet such notions would defeat the whole point of associating the ritual with Revelation 20. If we stay consistent with modern Adventist translations, the goat going to Azazel is unable to be Azazel, hence rejecting the idea that Satan's confinement is being symbolized.

Regardless of whether the issue above is resolved or not, there are several issues with the idea that the scapegoat ritual symbolizes Satan's millennium confinement. First, the timing and nature of the punishment Satan bears do not seem correct. According to Deut. 19:18-19, accusers are to have their demands reverted onto them if they are found to be falsely accusing. Satan, as the accuser of our brothers (Rev. 12:10), is destined to face this consequence. Moreover, based on Jesus's words, those who cause others to sin are punitively guilty (Matt. 18:6) and should die. Because Adventists believe Satan is the live goat, an attempt has been made to connect Satan's punishment to the goat bearing sins in Lev. 16. However, the Bible never explicitly says that Satan bears sins. As a response to a lack of evidence, Adventists used the previous verses to support the belief that Satan will eventually bear responsibility for man's sins. In doing so, Adventists created a new theology solely for supporting another theology. This begs to ask that this theology is investigated as well.

While it may be true that Satan will pay the final penalty for sins, the idea Satan bears our sins at the beginning of the millennium has little grounded support. According to Rev. 20:3, the only reason he is confined is so that he cannot deceive any nations, in other words, to keep him quiet. This is never presented as a penalty for sins, much less to bear sins. Rather, Romans 6:23 describes the wages of sin as death. If there is a punishment Satan pays for sins, it should be death. This happens at the end of the millennium, not the beginning. In this context, it would seem odd for Satan to bear sins at the millennium's beginning. In fact, in Ezekiel 28:18, God relays that the King of Tyre, who has been associated with Satan,¹⁰² was destroyed by fire as a response to the multitude of iniquities that profaned his sanctuaries. As Ezekiel's account suggests, the punishment for Satan's iniquities should be destruction, not imprisonment. One common verse brought up to support the idea Satan will bear iniquity is Revelation 18:4-6. Here, a voice from heaven commands that Babylon be paid back for her sinful deeds, and for this reason, "her plagues will come in a single day, death and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for mighty is the Lord God who has judged her." There is no imprisonment. There is an immediate penal death, all coming "in a single day." Moreover, judgment serves as the backdrop for this event. In Satan's case, that judgment comes at the end of the millennium, for the millennium is a judgment. During the millennium, we reign with God and judge with him (Rev. 20:4). We will be given time to look at the facts and evaluate whether Satan's accusations are true as we judge angels (1 Cor. 6:2-3). Considering this, it does not seem that Satan's judgment does not end at the second coming. There is a need for a universal agreement that Satan is guilty before he can be punished.

¹⁰² Jerome L. Skinner, "Ezekiel" in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel M Rodríguez, et al. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2020), 1007-1009.

As such, it does not seem logical that Satan should face consequences for his actions if the trial is not over.

Another issue Adventism's current interpretation faces is the geo-temporal symbolism of the scapegoat ritual. The first two acts related to atonement happen in the courtyard and sanctuary respectively. Those areas are symbolically partitioned as specific atonement-relevant events. The courtyard symbolizes Christ's earthly ministry, and the atoning of the sanctuary points to the pre-advent judgment. It would follow that the second courtyard scene (Lev. 16:21) would point to another specific event. The same could be said for the journey into the wilderness or the time in which the goat freely roams in the wilderness (Lev. 16:22). Under the Adventist view, this is not the case. The immediate consequence Satan faces after the pre-advent judgment is that of being pulled down into the bottomless pit. Since the live goat receiving sins is associated with Satan bearing the consequences of his actions, the courtyard must symbolize Satan being cast down. It would follow that the next notable partition of space and time, the journey into the wilderness, would symbolize Satan's time in the millennium. However, Adventists typically associate the wilderness journey with Satan being cast into the bottomless pit, not the millennium.¹⁰³ This means that two parts of the day of atonement are used to symbolize one event. If we are to stay consistent with the first two scenes of the Day of Atonement, each phase of the day should point to a separate event. Is the wilderness journey or the courtyard scene more suitable for Satan being cast down? In addition, it is not clear how Satan being cast down would create atonement. Satan's banishment in no way serves to help resolve the issue of sin. During the millennium, sin is being resolved through the judgment in heaven. Even if Satan were set free during the millennium, the judgment would likely continue, just as it did during the pre-advent judgment. As such, Satan being

¹⁰³ See Davidson, *Song*, 332.

imprisoned would likewise not impact atonement. These issues leave one question standing: what event does the courtyard scene represent? While Adventists can present arguments that Satan will eventually be responsible for his actions and the sins he created, there is no theological basis for the idea that this is fulfilled at the beginning of the second coming. This is unanswered.

To support the Adventist view, several arguments have been focused on making Satan a more favorable interpretation than Christ. These must be critiqued. Many of the arguments are not as substantial as they might seem. The most apparent argument for dismissal is the argument that Christ cannot represent Azazel because *la'aza'zel* should be translated “as Azazel” or “representing Azazel.” Since modern scholarship recognizes that the goat is going to Azazel, the identity of the goat no longer demands to be tied to Azazel. The rejection of Christ in the ritual by such linguistics can no longer be utilized.

Another critique may be made against the utilization of grammatical parallelism in rejecting Christ. The argument has been made that Christ is unrelated to the goat for Azazel because lots are cast for each goat, and the rendering of *la'* in *la'aza'zel* and *layhwh* in 16:8 means the goats are standing in the place of or serving in lieu of Azazel and YHWH. The primary evidence for this is that *la is* found on many coins and seals where it takes a possessive meaning (belonging to x, representing x).¹⁰⁴ While *la* may take on possessive qualities in that context, the lots cast in Leviticus are in a completely different context, so assuming the same applies here is not as clear-cut as some make it out to be. Regardless, while casting lots is often done for an inheritance, and *le* is sometimes used in a possessive manner, there is no evidence from the text that the possessive nature means that the goat represents Azazel.

¹⁰⁴ Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 1019-1020.

If one reads through the Levitical laws, not once (aside from ch. 16) is there even a hint that offerings were intended to serve as substitutes for God, angels, or demons. If the goat is Azazel, the YHWH must be the goat. In the case of the Lord's goat, there is no indication that they believed the goat was serving as YHWH. Since Christ is the High Priest and symbolizes the sacrificial goat, the expectation would be that the goat be designated *lecohen* (to the priest) if it is to represent Christ. The sacrificial goat corresponding to YHWH (who typifies the Father) makes little sense. In some cases (e.g., 1 Chron. 24:5, 25:8), lots are cast merely to determine which role a person will play in a service. It may be that the possessive thrust of casting lots is intended to convey which entity the ritual the goats belong to, whether that be cleaning YHWH's sanctuary or giving Azazel his punishment. Ritual offerings may give us the solution to model from. Translators often render "to sin" in a ritual context as "for a sin offering" despite the word "offering" not being there (e.g., 16:5). This adaptation is made because it only makes sense that the ritual is meant to deal with sin. If the same is happening with the *layhwh* and *la'aza'zel*, it might be appropriate to render them "for [dealing with] Azazel" or "for the Azazel ritual." While the Adventist rendering might not have significant inherent issues, it should not be used to discredit other views when other renderings are viable.

The third issue with rejecting Christ relates to the non-sacrificial nature of the live goat, as highlighted by Davidson. Leviticus 16 does not present the live goat as a sacrifice. Rather, it is sent into the wilderness and set free (Lev. 16:22). Because the goat is not sacrificial like the first goat, this leads Davidson to the conclusion that the goat is not constituted with the sin offering of the first goat.¹⁰⁵ This disassociation is used to contrast the scapegoat ritual with the live birds ritual in Lev. 14 which uses blood to link the identity of the two birds. As discussed above, his argument

¹⁰⁵ Davidson, *Song*, 330-331.

is laid on reasonable grounds to conclude that associating the live goat with Christ's resurrection. However, his argument overlooks some items that require deeper consideration. First, as Davidson describes it, the transfer of blood points to resurrection.¹⁰⁶ If the ritual were to be associated with another event aside from resurrection, there is no demand that blood be transferred. In such a case, the argument is non-substantial. It is not evident that Evangelicals favor the resurrection over other events that might symbolize the scapegoat ritual, and the demands for blood to be transferred should not necessarily be required in other contexts. Second, the conclusion that the goat is not connected to the sin offering of the first goat does not look at all the evidence. Leviticus 16:5 classifies the two goats as one sin offering: "And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering." The Hebrew word for sin offering is in the singular tense here. Hence, the rejection of unity does a disservice to what the text says and makes his claim questionable. Moreover, the atoning nature of the live goat also suggests this goat was, in a sense, a sin offering. While the two goats may have served different roles, the two goats are both required for the encampment of Israel to be completely atoned for. The fact that the goats are unified as a sin offering would indicate that these two goats might be associated with one another.

In addition to these issues, the non-sacrificial nature of the goat reveals further issues with the current interpretation of the scapegoat ritual. As discussed above, the final punishment for Satan's behavior is not confinement but death in the lake of fire. If the ritual were to point to Satan's full punishment, his death at the end of the millennium should be expected. However, the goat is non-sacrificial.¹⁰⁷ This claim runs counter to the idea that Satan dies at the end of the millennium. In Leviticus 16:22, the goat is set free into the wilderness. It is not killed as later

¹⁰⁶ Davidson, *Song*, 275.

¹⁰⁷ Gane, *Cult and Character*, 246-261; Davidson, *Song*, 330-331.

tradition would instruct. This is reiterated in Leviticus 17:7 which makes clear this desire: never sacrifice to the se'irim.¹⁰⁸ This follows right after Lev. 16's account of the Day of Atonement. It is provided as the context for chapter 17. Did the people see the scapegoat ritual as permission to sacrifice to goat-demons? The people may have killed the goat, and in response, God was clarifying that the goat they released was not intended to be killed. This lack of death disassociates Satan's end-of-millennium death from the ritual.

The Jewish tradition, on the other hand, could give favor to Satan's death at the end of the millennium. In the Mishna's tractate Yoma, we are told the tradition was to cast the goat off a cliff.¹⁰⁹ It could be that the arrival at the cliff signaled the end of the millennium. Still, this has its challenges. The death of the goat does not typify the one presented in Revelation 20. If the goat's death was to represent Satan's death, it would be quite suitable to kill it through fire like Revelation 20 does for Satan.¹¹⁰ Instead, the tradition was to push it off the cliff. While there is death, the lack of fire makes this connection imperfect. Because of these reasons, the revelation of Satan's death at the end of the millennium is lacking support as this interpretation demands.

Two verses that have occasionally been linked with the scapegoat ritual are Matthew 25:23 and Ezekiel 34:17. Both compare a shepherd sorting his flock to sorting the good from the bad during the judgment. In Matthew, God divides the good people (the sheep) from the bad people (the goats). The bad flock of goats has been associated by some with Satan's goat nature on the

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Levy, "Symbolism," 99. He relays the concern that Azazel cannot be a demon because the goat seems to be a sacrifice. He does not attempt to identify whether the goat was a sacrifice or not.

¹⁰⁹ Mishnah Yoma 6:6, 6:8

¹¹⁰ Regardless, if the goat is a representative of Azazel, it almost seems counter-intuitive to not sacrifice the goat. In the Bible, both God and Israelites destroyed idols which stood as the representatives of gods. The destruction of these idols has been interpreted by many as symbolizing victory over the false gods. In such a way, killing the goat could be seen as a victory over Azazel. This would not be a sacrifice to Azazel, but a sacrifice against Azazel.

Day of Atonement.¹¹¹ However, this overlooks the fact that Christ is also symbolized by a goat on the Day of Atonement. In addition, the selection is not between Christ and Satan but between good and bad people. A fair comparison cannot be made. Lastly, Jesus establishes that this is a parable about shepherding, not the Day of Atonement. Ezekiel 34 does something similar, but it is even more ambiguous. Rams, goats, and sheep are all involved in Ezekiel's shepherding scene. Resting on such verses does not hold together well.

Moreover, if Christ is not symbolized here, we might ponder that “every single feature of the Day of Atonement—the burnt offerings, the bull offering, the Lord's goat, the high priest, the veil—all of it is fulfilled by Jesus, except for the live goat?” Not to mention, there does not appear to be a shadow of Satan in any other sacrificial service.¹¹² Every other animal offering seems to point to Christ. If Jesus wasn't representing the live goat, this exception serves as quite the anomaly.

Finally, we may turn our sight to the writings of Ellen White. Since much of Adventist theology is shaped inside the guard rails of Ellen White, it behooves us to evaluate her thoughts on Azazel and his goat.¹¹³ Throughout her work, she does appear to be in favor of the goat representing Satan. For example, *The Great Controversy* 422.2 says,

It was seen, also, that while the sin offering pointed to Christ as a sacrifice, and the high priest represented Christ as a mediator, the scapegoat typified Satan, the author of sin, upon whom the sins of the truly penitent will finally be placed. When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin offering, removed the sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the scapegoat. When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. The scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, never to come again into the congregation of Israel. So will Satan be forever banished from the presence of God and His people, and he will be blotted from existence in the final destruction of sin and sinners.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Power of the Lamb Ministries, “Who is the Scapegoat?” Youtube, May 9, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yF-wO74f10&t=1869s>, 30:50.

¹¹² Michael V. Houghton, “The Problem of Azazel in the Day of Atonement,” *Proclamation!* 3, no. 5 (2002): 13.

¹¹³ For a greater documentation of Ellen White's statements, see Alberto Timm, “The Scapegoat in the Writings of Ellen G. White,” *Ministry* 85, no. 10 (October 2013): 10-12.

¹¹⁴ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1911), 422.

This is in favor of those who support the view that the goat is Satan. From what knowledge is available, she had originally accepted the scapegoat ritual as pointing to Satan because she was shown in vision that O. R. L. Crosier's writings in the Day Star Extra on the "had the true light, on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, etc."¹¹⁵ In Crosier's publication is a section on the scapegoat. It should be noted that White's quote above focuses primarily on the sanctuary and does not specifically mention the scapegoat.

Ellen White affirming Satan as the "scapegoat" does not paint the full picture. The previous quote comes from the 1911 revised edition of *The Great Controversy*, but was originally published in the 1888 version of the publication with the only difference being that "scape-goat" was changed to "scapegoat." However, looking at her works after 1888, we find a quote from her that does not follow the paradigm. Her second to last comment about the scapegoat (excluding republished works) was written afterward in 1897 and stands in contrast.¹¹⁶ Its description stands on the side of the Evangelical crowd:

Some apply the solemn type, the scapegoat, to Satan. This is not correct. He cannot bear his own sins. At the choosing of Barabbas, Pilate washed his hands. He cannot be represented as the scapegoat. The awful cry, uttered with a hasty, awful recklessness, by the Satan-inspired multitude, swelling louder and louder, reaches up to the throne of God, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." [Matthew 27:25.] Christ was the Scapegoat, which the type represents. He alone can be represented by the goat borne into wilderness. He alone, over whom death had not power, was able to bear our sins.¹¹⁷

This was written in 1897 and veers from what it appears she was saying earlier. In the vast amount of her work, she used the King James Version. It wasn't until the turn of the century that she began to use other translations. Being familiar with the KJV, she likely merged the two because

¹¹⁵ Ellen G. White, "To Bro. Eli Curtis," in *A Word to the "Little Flock,"* ed. James White (Brunswick, ME: James White, 1847), 12.

¹¹⁶ Her final mention of the scapegoat, written in 1901 (16LtMs, Ms. 194, 1901, par. 1), she calls the scapegoat Satan. She gives no following details. While one could try to reconcile this shift by saying she saw the goat and scapegoat as separate entities, it is unlikely that she was presenting Azazel and the goat as separate entities in this context.

¹¹⁷ Ellen G. White, *Letters and Manuscripts* (Ellen White Estate, 1897), 12: Ms. 112, Par. 47.

the KJV presents the goat as being the scapegoat. Ellen White's understanding of the scapegoat ritual was based on this, and with Crosier considering Azazel to be the name of the scapegoat, there was no reason to refute this. In the late 1800s, she began to become more familiar with the revised translations, which may have led her to further consideration of identity of the goat as the quote above suggests. The English Revised Version translates "the goat *la'aza'zel*" as "the goat for Azael." No longer was the goat presented as being the scapegoat. It was now traveling on behalf of Azazel. While she may have had a vision affirming Crosier's views on the sanctuary, it appears this did not settle her views about the scapegoat section of the publication. Moreover, modern scholarship would not agree with some of the claims that Crosier makes about the scapegoat, namely that the goat is named "Azazel."¹¹⁸ Few scholars accept such a translation today.¹¹⁹ Since it appears there is uncertainty in White's writings and because Crosier's interpretation holds issues, this paper argues that it is unwise to rely on White for authoritative guidance on this topic.

A Solution to the Enigma of the Azazel Ritual

As has been reviewed, Seventh-day Adventists have typically assumed Satan is the goat, but there are several issues with this. On the other hand, Evangelical scholars have held that Christ represents the goat, but their at-the-cross mentality typically falls short. As both Evangelicals and Adventists understand, Azazel appears to be a wilderness demon that is likely to be Satan, and the live goat in Lev. 16 appears to be traveling to him. With modern scholarship from both sides arguing that the goat goes *to* Azazel, there is a need to reassess if our understanding is right because "to" in "the goat *to* Azazel" would indicate the goat is an entity separate from Azazel. Azazel's

¹¹⁸ Crosier, "Moses," 43.9.

¹¹⁹ Gladson, *Enigma*, 62-64.

existence in the wilderness is overlooked when Adventists symbolically interpret Leviticus, and this also requires recognition. After careful study, there seems to be a solution in merging the Evangelical emphasis on Christ as the goat and the Adventist emphasis on Satan being another name for Azazel. To understand why Adventists should consider Christ to be the live goat, we will now look at the evidence favoring the idea that the goat represents Christ.

Christ as the Goat to Azazel

The core reason many Christians believe Christ is the goat is because of its description: “The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself” (Lev. 16:22).¹²⁰ Within the Bible, the only person attested to bearing all our iniquities is Christ himself. The reader may immediately think of John the Baptist’s statement, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world” (Jn. 1:29). Perhaps 1 Peter 2:24 comes to mind, which says, “He himself bore our sins on the tree.” In both cases, the writers appear to be pulling inspiration from the suffering servant account of Isaiah 53.¹²¹ Unsurprisingly, this passage is tied to the sanctuary service. Christ was “like a lamb that is led to the slaughter” (Isa. 53:7). Now in Heaven’s sanctuary, he “makes intercession for the transgressors” (Isa 53:12). These verses illuminate the role that He served as the Lord’s goat whose blood is working to heal the relationship between God and us. This isn’t just any service being highlighted; it is atonement. Sprinkling blood is a concept specifically typical of the Day of Atonement, which this passage seems to refer to: “So shall he sprinkle many nations” (Isa.

¹²⁰ Davidson, *Song*, 332.

¹²¹ For Isa. 53’s relationship with Jn. 1:29, see Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:452-54. For Isa. 53 and 1 Pt. 2:24, see Paul Achtemeier, *1 Peter: A Commentary on First Peter* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 128-129.

52:15).¹²² Not only is the first goat's atoning role highlighted, but details that typify the live goat are also mentioned.

“And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa 53:6)

“And he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa. 53:11)

“Yet he bore the sin of many.” (Isa. 53:12)

Within the sacrificial system, there was only one ritual that involved an animal bearing all of the sins of a whole congregation: the scapegoat ritual. Christ is identified both as never sinning and also bearing our sins (1 Pt. 2:22-24). It would be quite suitable for there to be a link between these two since, without the second goat, only one-half of Christ's atoning work may be represented. This is because the goat for the Lord does not atone for the people or take on any sin. That goat only atones for the sanctuary and its objects, not the people. It is only the second goat that atones for people. Interestingly, a special emphasis is placed on the fact that the live goat bears iniquities (*avon*). The iniquities are only mentioned in the ritual of Azazel's goat and not the Lord's goat. The word *avon*, meaning “iniquity” or “culpability,” is a term for sin that demands consequence. When the suffering servant is prophesied to bear iniquity on himself in Isa. 53, he was not simply bearing sin; he was bearing the demand for the repayment of sin that we would otherwise have to pay. Both the live goat and the suffering servant are presented in this same way—bearing sin that demands death. If the live goat, bearing our sins, were to not point to Isaiah 53, the ritual may be inadequate to represent all of Christ's work. If both of those features are to be seen in the Day of Atonement's picture, both goats must be accepted to point to Christ.

Just as atonement is not fully represented by just one goat, Christ's atoning ministry is not fully fulfilled in only one goat. According to Daniel 9:24, the 70-week prophecy says that its

¹²² See Geoffrey W. Grogan, “Isaiah” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Frank E. Gaebelin, Richard P. Polcyn (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 6:301; Bertil Wiklander, “Isaiah” in *Andrews Bible Commentary*, ed. Ángel M. Rodríguez et al. (Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2020), 1:889.

fulfillment included the goal “to atone for iniquity.” The 70-week prophecy is about the coming of the Messiah, and the most suitable context for this through a historicist perspective would be him bearing the iniquities of all on the cross, as suggested by Isaiah 53. Daniel 9:24 is focused on Christ’s “courtyard” ministry, his 1st-century work on Earth.¹²³ In the courtyard, the Lord’s goat does not “atone” for anything. On the other hand, in line with Daniel 9:24, the goat sent to Azazel does atone while inside the courtyard. Hence, if the live goat represents Christ, then the account of Leviticus 16 adequately shows the atoning work of the Messiah. Together, these goats provide the unified sin offering in Lev. 16:5.

On the note of the goats “jointly constituting with it one sin-offering,”¹²⁴ we might also discuss the unity of the goats. In addition to the nature of the live goat’s responsibilities, the relationship of the goats would indicate they are not juxtaposed but rather are unified. This is most clear in Lev. 16:5 when it says, “two male goats for a sin offering.” Notice the singular offering. The text, from the start, makes it evident that these goats aren’t juxtaposed. While their recipients may be juxtaposed (God and Satan), the demand that the goats are as well is not necessarily true. Morales summarizes this fact excellently:

The rite is fully integrated as part of one complete ceremony... For example, while two rams are also used on the Day of Atonement, as ascension offerings for the priestly house and for Israel respectively, yet these two animals are not brought together in the same fashion as are the two goats. The text is quite careful to portray the goats as a set: the high priest takes them both from the congregation of Israel, presents them both together before YHWH at the door of the tent of meeting, and then casts lots for both of them.¹²⁵

¹²³ As additional evidence against Satan representing the goat, we can also highlight the peculiarity of the goat starting in the courtyard. If the courtyard represents earth, there should be some confusion about why the goat would need to travel into the wilderness under standard Adventist interpretation. Since the “bottomless pit” of Revelation 20 is typically associated with the pre-creation, desolate earth, it seems strange that the goat would need to go out if he is already on the earth.

¹²⁴ Kellogg, *Leviticus*, 267.

¹²⁵ Morales, *Mountain*, 178-179.

The number of things in favor of their similarity—the difference between the rams’ and goats’ selection, the presentation before the lord of the goats, the casting of lots, and the fact that Lev. 16:5 calls them one offering—all indicate the goats are equal.

More evidence of their unity is found in the presentation of the two goats for casting lots. Adventists have recognized that the goats are presented for lots in a grammatically parallel way when it says “for YHWH” and “for Azazel” in Lev. 16:8.¹²⁶ This connection is typically used to argue that YHWH and Azazel are juxtaposed. While that may be true, the parallel presentation before YHWH also goes to show that the goats were closely unified.

Their unity goes beyond the rites and into the textual patterns themselves; they are unified organizationally. Not only is Leviticus 16 the chiastically most important passage as the center of the Pentateuch but it is also structured chiastically itself. Here is a chiasm as provided by Morales:¹²⁷

- Frame: ‘And YHWH said to Moses...’ (16:1)
- A. Aaron should not go into the holy of holies (16:1-2)
- B. Aaron’s sacrificial victims, special garments (16:3-4)
- C. People bring sacrificial victims (16:5)
- D. Aaron’s bull, the Lord’s goat, the goat for Azazel (16:6-10)
- E. Aaron opening activity: sacrificing bull (16:11-14)
- F. Goat sacrificed as a sin offering (16:15)
- X. Atonement in the Sanctuary (16:16-20a)
- F’. Goat sent to wilderness (16:20b-22)
- E’. Aaron’s closing activities (16:23-25)
- D’. Goat for Azazel, Aaron’s bull, the Lord’s goat (16:26-28)
- C’. People rest and humble themselves (16:29-31)
- B’. Anointed priest officiates wearing special garments (16:32-33)
- A’. Anointed priest makes atonement once a year (16:34)
- Frame: ‘As YHWH commanded Moses... (16:34)

In Morales’s chiasm of Leviticus 16, the goats are placed in F and F’ respectively. This similar placement further unifies the two goats. We understand that Christ’s death on the cross was

¹²⁶ E.g. Davidson, *Song*, 330. Hasel, *Studies*, 122.

¹²⁷ With slight adjustments in the titles, the following chiasm is based on Morales, *Mountain*, 177. For a very similar presentation, see Rodríguez, “*Leviticus*,” 262.

in the courtyard. It seems quite fitting that the second goat in the courtyard would also allude to an earthly ministry.

These parallels would indicate they are unified, and this unity would indicate shared symbolism. It shouldn't be a surprise then that Jesus is represented by both features. Whether it be the fact that the goat and Christ both bear our iniquities or the unity of the offerings, there is significant evidence supporting the idea that Christ is the goat.

The Antitypical Timing to the Rites

While there are strong grounds for reconsidering the current Adventist interpretation and recognizing the viability of Christological typology for the second goat, we have yet to answer the fulfillment of the courtyard scene, wilderness journey, and dropping off to Azazel. Determining the nature of the event relayed and utilizing a proper understanding of the text are of crucial importance for uncovering the ritual's symbolism. Our goal should not be to create new theology.¹²⁸ As such, this paper withholds from introducing ideas that are radically new. Rather, a typological shift to the Adventist view may be all that is needed to solve the current issues and bring down the iron wall of which figure fulfills the live goat.

Setting aside the goat's identity, we know that the scapegoat ritual should follow the atoning of the sanctuary. Leviticus 16:20 specifically instructs that "When he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat." Adventists have associated the cleansing of the sanctuary with the time up until the probation before the second coming. Bearing that in mind, we would expect the subsequent events to use the

¹²⁸ Not that it was incorrect, but Adventism did develop theology to suit their need for this typological fulfillment. They had to show that Satan would be the final holder of sin, a new idea not found in earlier Christian theology. While it is clear Satan pays the wages of sin at the end of the millennium, the Bible never says that Satan will be given sin at the second coming. This idea is typically only mentioned when discussing the scapegoat doctrine and seems to be a result of creating the Adventist scapegoat doctrine.

same timeline; the probation or second coming would be expected to follow the sanctuary's atonement.¹²⁹

Following the sanctuary's atonement, we see the courtyard scene where sins are laid on the live goat. If the goat is Christological, there is a suitable fulfillment found in the second coming, for just as Christ's earthly 1st-century ministry is in the courtyard, it is quite suitable that his return to earth would be revealed in a return to the courtyard.

Before discussing the fulfillment of the scapegoat ritual, it is worth noting that the goats of the Day of Atonement should not individually encompass the entire work of Christ. The first goat focuses on the sin-expelling power of his death. Inside the sanctuary, Christ presents his blood, his sacrifice, as the propitiation for judgment. In addition, this goat never takes on sins as Christ does. In that case, the goat cannot be Christ himself but rather an aspect related to Christ. Likewise, the second goat should not be expected to symbolize the entire personage of Christ (or Satan). Because the goat carries all of Israel's sins, we should expect that the goat symbolizes the sins Christ bore for us. As we reflect on the Day of Atonement, we will find this idea presented in striking fulfillment.

The courtyard scene of placing sins on the goat matches excellently with a second coming fulfillment. To understand this, we should highlight that while Christ's death on the cross did atone for our iniquities (Dan. 9:24), the effect of removing sins was not revealed to man then and there. Man is still prone to actively sinning. We would expect that Christ has more work to do beyond the cross to resolve that. This is found in the sanctuary's atonement. Its antitype, the pre-advent

¹²⁹ Rodríguez, "Day of Atonement," 254. While the following will present a holistic view of what the scapegoat ritual accomplishes, Lev. 16:17 highlights that the scapegoat ritual happens right before the second coming. In addition, the burnt offerings atone for impurities and the scapegoat offering atones for sin, further deepening this conversation. See the section "Notable Features for Future Study" for further discussion.

judgment, shows that Christ was worthy of paying our sins. While Christ proves that he is worthy to bear our sins during the judgment, they are not removed. The end of the judgment, the second coming, is where the judicial atonement is executed. At this time, sinful propensities are removed from God's followers. In the same way, the sins from the limbo of the sanctuary are completely removed from the people once they are placed upon the goat. Christ takes away our sin-tainted nature at the second coming (1 Cor. 15:51-56), so no longer will we aim to sin. Through the second coming, the effects of Christ's death on the cross are fulfilled.

Hebrews 9:26-28 adds more to this story. The writer starts by reminding us that Christ dealt with sins by bearing them on the cross. Verse 28 concludes by saying that Christ will appear again, not to once again deal with sin but to bring salvation. Likewise, the first goat had already died. If the second were Christ, there would be no need for it to die. That is exactly how the rites play out. The transfer of sin required no sacrifice, reminding us that Christ only needed to die once to fulfill the conditions for our salvation.

Azazel is out in the wilderness. The goat is coming with sin, and soon, he will be the one to take them. This delivery is best fulfilled at the end of the millennium when Satan bears the wages of sin. The live goat has been described as a ritual garbage truck, a tote-goat.¹³⁰ It is carrying the sins of the people to Azazel. In verse 22, a special emphasis is made to specify that the iniquities (culpabilities), sins that demand repayment, are Azazel's gift. As the goat is bringing every single sin of the camp, there is no escape the wages of these sins will be death (Rom 6:23). Azazel receiving these sins would destine him to death. Satan pays those wages at the end of the millennium when he is killed by being thrown in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). It makes sense, then,

¹³⁰ Gane, *Cult and Character*, 264.

to connect the dropping off of the sin-laden goat with Azazel to the end of the millennium, when Satan receives judgment for the sins he created.¹³¹

The ancient Jew was not foreign to the idea that Satan should be the final bearer of sin.¹³² Through the phases of judgment, the heavenly host and humanity will see that “Satan is a malicious witness against the people of God, accusing them of sins that have been atoned for by Christ, and that God is fully just to justify them according to Christ’s righteousness.”¹³³ As legal demands require false accusation to be repaid (Deut. 19:18-19) and that death be repaid for those who cause others to sin (Matt. 18:6), it appears fully fair that Satan pays the wages of sin for being man’s accuser and sin’s instigator.¹³⁴

Further evidence for this idea is supported by the journey into the wilderness itself, in particular, the expiation of sin. To understand the wilderness journey, we will return to the scene in the sanctuary precincts. During the pre-advent cleansing of the sanctuary, it is judgment that expels sin from the sanctuary. It seems reasonable to see judgment and expiation (atonement) as correlated. And as discussed above, atonement continues during the scapegoat ritual. Hence, just as atonement does not end at the sanctuary, we would expect that more judgment happens after the pre-advent judgment. We find this fulfilled in the millennium. During the millennium, we

¹³¹ Accompanied by the millennium confinement is a lack of accusations from Satan. Interestingly, this is somewhat seen in Jewish literature on the Day of Atonement. In Talmud Yoma 20a:1, it is said the day was the only day Satan could not prosecute. Another tradition narrows this down to the time of a hike. It is said that there is a Midrash which says Satan is silent for three hours. See George B. Gray, *Sacrifice in the Old Testament: Its Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), 319. While I have found Midrash affirming what the Talmud says about a one-day cease (Midrash Rabbah Vayikra 21:4), I have been unable to find a written source for the three-hour view.

¹³² E.g. 1 Enoch 10:8

¹³³ Davidson, *Song*, 332.

¹³⁴ Cf. Rev. 18:4-9. Babylon is judged for the deeds brought by her. It should be noted that Babylon is not Satan. Babylon incurs judgment at the end of time before the millennium; this judgment is accompanied by its destruction preceding the millennium, unlike Satan.

become the judges and reign with Christ (Rev. 20:4-6). This atonement continues until Satan eventually faces his demise. The parallels to the millennium judgment do not end here.

If the millennium judgment is the atonement revealed in the scapegoat ritual, we have further evidence to support this. Between the second courtyard scene and the journey into the wilderness, the practitioner switches from the high priest to a man. During the pre-advent judgment, Christ, our high priest, is serving as our judge. Judicial roles were typical of priests (Ezk. 44:24; cf. Deut. 21:5; Zech. 3:7). Unlike the pre-advent judgment, we will serve as the primary judges during the millennium (Rev 20:4; 1 Cor 6:2-3). Considering this difference, the fact that the Day of Atonement's practitioner switches from the priest to man seems to parallel the judicial switch from Christ to us. Once the high priest hands the reins of the goat over to the man, the high priest is no longer the judge. It is man(kind) that serves as the nation of judge-priests.¹³⁵ 1 Corinthians 6:2 says that the saints are to judge the world, something fulfilled during the millennium. Verse 3 suggests something even further: "We are to judge angels." Satan is one of those angels under judgment. We, God's people, will take a leading role in the service, guiding judgment to Satan. This is where we find the nature of the wilderness journey. Just like a man takes the sin-laden goat to Azazel, we will take the sins Christ bore for us back to Satan. He, like Azazel, will be delivered iniquity by being thrown into the lake of fire and dying.

The intertextual relationship between Lev. 16 and Rev. 20 made through 1 Enoch further confirms this theory. As 1 Enoch indicates, Azazel's wilderness imprisonment is the same as Satan's millennium imprisonment. Furthermore, in 1 Enoch, Azazel is confined at Doudael. As noted above, Doudael (doo-da-el) has been recognized as a textual variant of Hiddudo (hi-doo-

¹³⁵ While the whole camp is not sending the goat out, Mishnah Yoma 6:3 seems to affirm the idea that all are part of this judgment when it says that "everyone is eligible to lead it."

do), which the Mishnah calls the destination of the goat's journey. This would mean that the live goat's destination is Azazel's prison. Bearing that in mind, if the goat is going to Azazel and his prison, we would expect Azazel to be imprisoned there. Since the goat is actively traveling to Azazel, Azazel must be imprisoned during the goat's journey. Bearing these facts in mind, 1 Enoch comes to the same conclusion already made that the whole journey would symbolize Satan's imprisonment: the millennium.

Considering this theory, atonement on the day of Atonement would be accomplished in two units. (1) The cleansing of the sanctuary serves as the core portion of the atonement for the sanctuary. However, the following courtyard scenes where the sins are placed upon the live goat and the burnt offerings serve as the completion or execution of the atonement. This is evidenced by Lev. 16:17 statement that re-entrance into the sanctuary was not possible until the burnt offering was finished. This would imply that the sanctuary's resolving atonement required the volatile sins to be de-volatilized for the sanctuary to be restored to its rightful state. Because the live goat took on sins just as the burnt offerings dealt with impurities, the placing of sin onto the goat serves to complete the sanctuary's atonement in the sense that sin has found a destination. (2) The goat's journey into the wilderness serves as the second atonement, and the eventual transfer of sin into Azazel's hands completes that atonement. While man and God are brought into an uninterrupted state of unity now that the sins have been removed from both, there is still the need to remove the goat from the sanctuary, lest the goat re-contaminate the camp in any way. In fact, the practitioner of this part of the service had to wash himself and his clothes outside the camp, implying that he received some residual sins from simply being near the goat. Because "to send" and "to atone" form the parallelism, the sending action must be the atonement. The completion of the atonement

is found when the goat is delivered to a suitable recipient: the progenitor of sins. In line with this view of atonement and its completion, Jiri Moskala notes:

There then follow two tangible executions of atonement: (1) at the second coming of Christ when eternal life is given to Christ's faithful children (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; Hebrews 9:28); and (2) at the end of the millennium when all the wicked, the fallen angels, and Satan will be punished and annihilated during the last judgment (Revelation 20:7-15).¹³⁶

In Moskala's observations, both the second coming and the end of the millennium are executions of atonement; the judicial phases preceding each execution are atonements. Using these observations, each atonement would find a place in Leviticus 16 under this paper's interpretation of the scapegoat ritual. The cleansing of the sanctuary is the investigative judgment, and the placement of sins on the second goat is the second coming. The next atonement, the dispatching of the goat, is the millennium judgment, and the delivery of sins to Azazel is the end-of-millennium execution of judgment. Interestingly, the idea that both judgments are atonement has other possible fulfillment in the text. In Lev. 16:5, the priest is instructed to "take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering." Here, both goats are presented as working for a single sin offering. Noting this, Gladson says,

The full effect of the atonement could not have been adequately represented by the first goat, hence the selection of the second, "ideally identified with the other," "jointly constituting with it one sin-offering"¹³⁷

Both goats are required for the issue of sin to be resolved. The depth brought by the interplay of judgment, atonement, and the execution of atonement/judgment is remarkable. In no other interpretation can such depth be found in the day of atonement. If this symbolism is adopted by Adventists, Evangelicals will certainly become more open to this view since the goat is not

¹³⁶ Jiri Moskala, "The Significance, Meaning, and Role of Christ's Atonement," in *God's Character and the Last Generation*, ed. Jiri Moskala & John Peckham (Nampa: Pacific Press, 2018), 194.

¹³⁷ Gladson, "Enigma," 62. Citing Samuel H. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1901), 267.

Satan, but they will also be able to see a much deeper plan to resolve sin, something not fully capable of being done in the current sanctuary model.

Conclusion

Traditionally, Adventists have interpreted the Day of Atonement as a revelation of the investigative judgment and Azazel's goat as symbolizing Satan's imprisonment at the beginning of the millennium. On the other hand, Evangelicals have commonly argued Christ's 1st-century work fulfills all of the Day of Atonement's services, including the scapegoat ritual. This is being popularized to the extent that some inside the Adventist church are more comfortable with the latter view of the scapegoat rather than the former. However, most Adventists have held up a defense against such an idea. As such, no Adventist scholarship has pondered whether there is even a possibility for such an idea in our sanctuary system.

After reviewing the evidence, the contrasting views find themselves quite compatible in a way that does not compromise our sanctuary theology. First, the nature of the live goat and the identity of Azazel (originally called the scapegoat) must be determined. From current Adventist and Evangelical scholars, it is recognized that the live goat atones for people and travels to Azazel, an entity separate from the traveling goat. As supported by most scholars, Azazel appears to be a demon, Satan. This is supported by a plethora of our oldest writings linking the two and the Bible's mention of wilderness demons that fit the context of Azazel's existence.

Amidst several issues with both Evangelical and Adventist views on the scapegoat ritual, it is apparent that neither group has a resolution that answers all questions, and it is notably visible that modern Adventist scholarship is no longer able to maintain the traditional Adventist interpretation of the ritual. While the timing lines up well, Satan's banishment into the pit does not appear to be in the picture if the goat is now being sent "to Azazel." How would Satan be sent to

Satan? Moreover, the revelation of atonement seems lackluster. The following chart outlines the current Adventist view in comparison to Moskala’s outline of the grand atonement:

The Adventist View

Leviticus 16	Heavenly Fulfillment
The Atoning Process	
Cleansing the sanctuary	The Investigative Judgment
Completion/Execution of Atonement	
Partial Representation: Satan being cast into the pit	The Second Coming
The Atoning Process	
N/A	The Millennium Judgment
Completion/Execution of Atonement	
The goat dies in the wilderness	Satan killed

Rather than maintain this, there seems to be a solution found in identifying the goat with Christ. This is indicated by the inheritance of sin, the timing of events, and the unity between the sacrificial goat and the live goat. With these things in mind, the Day of Atonement appears to be pointing to clear, significant events related to atonement, not just the sanctuary’s cleansing. The following chart outlines these fulfillments:

The Proposed View

Leviticus 16	Heavenly Fulfillment
The Atoning Process	
Cleansing the sanctuary	The Investigative Judgment
Completion/Execution	
Placing the sins on the goat & the burnt offering	The Second Coming (Christ physically removing our sins)
The Atoning Process	
The goat’s journey	The Millennium Judgment
Completion/Execution	
Delivering the sins to Azazel	End-of-Millennium Judgment

Beyond serving as a new approach to our current Adventist sanctuary typology, the notions of this paper can also resolve some issues Evangelicals have with our beliefs surrounding the scapegoat ritual. Right around the time this paper was originally published, Dr. Eric Mason, pastor

of Epiphany Fellowship Church, uploaded a video critiquing the Adventist church and calling it a cult.¹³⁸ A large portion of the video was dedicated to attacking Adventist views on the scapegoat ritual. The primary concern relayed is the misconception that we believe Satan is involved in our salvation. The interpretation suggested by this paper avoids the chance of such a conclusion. Through this new approach, Christ stays as the focus of all salvation. If we are capable of presenting a more coherent approach to the sanctuary doctrine, it follows that people would be more likely to accept our views on the sanctuary. Already, Evangelicals are becoming more open to the idea that “it is *not* finished” at the cross.¹³⁹ The opportunity to show them what is needed to finish the atonement is at hand, so we should not hold off further considerations that might form a more coherent sanctuary doctrine.

Notable Features for Future Study

This study has led me to other areas which deserve separate attention. First, while I uphold the view above, others may search for other reconciliation to the issues above, and as such, I discuss that below. In addition, I have found one major area of benefit to the Adventist church’s view on historicism but also an area of concern that has not received any antitypical attention.

(1) This paper maintains that the scapegoat ritual is best fulfilled through the scenes discussed above, but this is an ongoing conversation and is not necessarily settled in this paper. There is the possibility that another typology might help answer the issues with the current Adventist view. While it is not necessarily the only interpretation of the text, the lots cast favor the idea that there is some possessive nature to the rites. It still stands that the goat cannot be (or symbolize) Azazel since it is sent to him, but there may be some ways in which entities aside from

¹³⁸ Eric Mason (@pastoremase). “This is a Quick Response to those in the SDA Church...” Instagram, April 23, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/pastoremase/reel/C6HgW0My4pv/>

¹³⁹ Morales, *Rethinking the Atonement*.

Christ fulfill the ritual. Notably, Hans Moscicke, who has focused on the Day of Atonement in the gospels, thoroughly presented the idea that Matthew 25:32-33's end-time judgment portrayed by the selection between goats and sheep may have been drawing on Day of Atonement themes (though through an Enochic lens).¹⁴⁰ I will note, however, very plausibly have been drawing from Ezekiel 34:17's similar judicial-shepherding passage, but Moscicke only briefly mentions it. Regardless, under Moscicke's idea that the passage points to the Day of Atonement's Azazel goat, it might be that the guilty are the ones being sent to Azazel. However, I will note that this has several typological issues, the least of them being inconsistent typology (when compared to the Lord's goat) and the large time gap the view leaves since this fulfillment would happen at the end of the millennium. Another view that may hold some potential is the possibility that the goat symbolizes a portion of Satan, just like how the first goat only symbolizes the atoning power of Christ's death. In other, part of Satan's fate is brought to him. Predictably, taking this view would lead to a hyper-nuanced view of the ritual. However, they may have some untapped potential. While I have contentions with these alternate solutions, there may be explanations found for these issues if they are further investigated. Hence, I leave these here for those who also aim to continue this discussion. Regardless, my hope is that we can move beyond the current typology we've held onto for so long and into a more coherent typology that will not be a theological round door for those who enter the church.

(2) The Adventist church has tied the Levitical process to the fulfillment in Christ's ministry. Most notably, it has been recognized that the heavenly judgment in Daniel 7 is a fulfillment of the atoning of the sanctuary done through the sacrificial goat on Yom Kippur. However, less attention has been given to the idea that the sanctuary services were prefiguring

¹⁴⁰ Hans Moscicke, "The Final Judgment as Ritual Purgation of the Cosmos: The Influence of Scapegoat Traditions on Matt 25.31-46," in *New Testament Studies* 67, no. 2 (2021): 241-259.

history. However, as the sanctuary service is supposed to model a grander fulfillment on a heavenly scale, we would expect that the rites would be systematically revealed in history. Two items have stood out for being capable of painting a broader historicist fulfillment of Leviticus 16.

(2.1) In a recent episode of BibleProject, Tim Mackee introduced the idea that the consecration of the priesthood and death of Nadab and Abihu in Leviticus 8-10 may mirror the creation and fall narrative of Genesis 2-3.¹⁴¹ Importantly, these passages intersect with Leviticus 16 in its first verse: “The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron” (16:1). The death of these two serves as the crisis requiring a Day of Atonement. This is important because the placement of this story strikingly conjures memories of the entrance of sin in the garden. Aaron’s sons, Nadab and Abihu, had died while improperly treating God’s instruments before the Lord. Because of this, Aaron is no longer able to go into the sanctuary at any time (Lev 16:2). Similarly, Adam and Eve ate the fruit and defiled the access they once had to the garden. The words “in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” are seemingly re-fulfilled by Aaron’s sons. If these connections are given consideration and tied to Adventist theology, we can further develop and form a couple of arguments: (A) In defense of Christianity, if the Day of Atonement is meant to model a crisis larger than the death of two people, we expect can that the Day of Atonement’s other services are also intended to reveal a larger resolution than a yearly service. (B) At a minimum, sin’s entrance in Eden is modeled by Nadab and Abihu, and Christ’s death on the cross is modeled by the death of the sinless goat. If the Day of Atonement reveals multiple events with large gaps of time in between their occurrence, it should not be assumed that everything else on the day would happen at the cross. It seems likely that other parts of the Day of Atonement would find fulfillment at later parts of time (e.g., Satan receiving his punishment during the

¹⁴¹ Tim Mackee and Jon Collins, “Leviticus: The Dangerous Gift of God’s Presence,” *BibleProject*, June 20, 2022, <https://bibleproject.com/podcast/dangerous-gift-gods-presence/>.

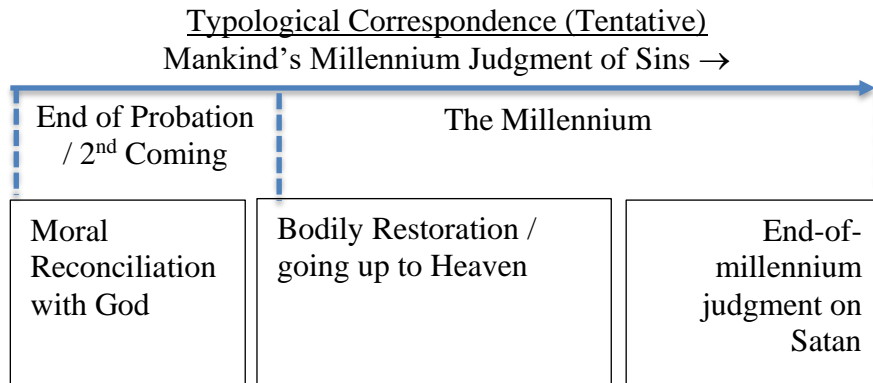
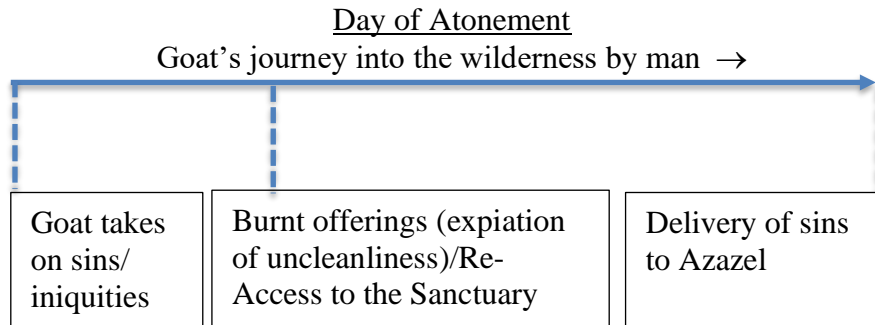
scapegoat ritual or access to heaven as might be hinted by Lev. 16:17). Following (and seemingly in light of) BibleProject's publication, two papers have further developed this theory.¹⁴² However, the Adventist church has yet to discuss this topic. Future attention should be given to these passages because it appears they might hold value for future defenses of our sequential-historicist view of the sanctuary.

(2.2) The passage of 1 Enoch highlighted above, likewise, is an area that supports a historicist view of the sanctuary doctrine. As highlighted, 1 En. 10:4-8 links to Rev. 20:1-3 in at least eight clear parallels despite being written at least 300 years before Revelation's composition. Simultaneously, it uses language from the scapegoat ritual to describe the sentence placed upon Azazel. Since John seems to be using 1 Enoch 10:4-8 which uses the Day of Atonement motif, one could make argue that there are strong grounds to correlate Revelation 20's story with Leviticus 16's wilderness demon Azazel. However, this view should be left to the "edification of the saints," not an argument to share widely among congregations. As noted above, the book is a collection of two combined oral traditions, and since the traditions shift throughout the book as each source has a different version of the story, much of Enoch is not theologically affirmable. As such, unless one compares the text to scripture and finds direct parallels to the Bible, 1 Enoch should not be a message to proclaim. Regardless, it can at least be stated that our oldest record of Azazel outside the Bible has Day of Atonement context and is fulfilled through Satan's punishment.

¹⁴² See Richard Barry, "'They Feasted their Eyes': Nadab, Abihu, and the Original Sin," in *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 17, no. 2 (2023): 145-165; Benjamin Kilchör, "The Eighth Day: The Appointment of Adam as Priest in Eden and the Priestly Profile of Genesis 2-3," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 36, no. 2 (2022): 255–66. Kilchör argues that the placing of Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen. 2) and their fall to sin (Gen. 3) parallels Leviticus's appointment of the priest (Lev. 9) and the death of Aaron's sons (Lev. 10). While it would be nice to incorporate the Gen. 2 and Lev. 9 parallels into the narrative, Lev. 16 does not include any mention of such topics and there should hence be caution in making extended connections. See also Gregory Beale, "Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48, no. 1 (2005): 5-31. Beale identifies several features that place the garden and sanctuary as parallel concepts.

(3) Leviticus 16:17 prescribes that entrance into the sanctuary will be restored upon the priest's completion of atonement after the atoning burnt offering. What wonderful news that is! We will no longer have to rely on the great High Priest (Heb 4:14), the forerunner (Heb. 6:20), to convene with God. If we are Christians, part of Christ's household (Gal. 6:10) and part of the royal priesthood (1 Pt. 2:9, Ps. 110:3), the completion of atonement mentioned in Lev. 16:17 should provide us with physical access to the sanctuary upon the completion of atonement. In other words, this seems to be a wonderful fulfillment of the ascension to Heaven after Christ returns to Earth. However, the prescription happens after the scapegoat ritual begins. This has been given no attention by Adventism. As such, discerning the meaning of this rite is less substantive, but some assumptions may be made. First, since the live goat's journey is ongoing, the rite points to something that happens before it finishes. This means that this ritual happens before the end-millennium judgment. Second, this may atone for the corruption not covered by the scapegoat ritual. Considering that their uncleanness is not placed onto the live goat, this atonement may expiate that physical uncleanness. With these three things in mind, there are three possible fulfillments: (A) Since the ritual happens after the scapegoat journey begins (the millennium), this burnt offering atonement starts inside the millennium. (B) Since the burnt offering entails readmission into the sanctuary, the scapegoat ritual does not occur at the turn of the millennium/second coming but right before it. (C) It might be that since both rituals intend to remove corruptibility from the camp, they run parallel to each other and are separate simply because their goals are different. As such, they are both at the second coming. Based on the prescription of readmission in 16:17 and the distinction between the rams and the goat, the logical solution seems to be that the scapegoat ritual happens shortly before the bodily purification of the second coming. In this case, our moral faults (iniquities, transgressions, sins) are removed before

our physical state (uncleanliness) is removed. Against last-generation theology, note that it is not man that removes the sins but rather the High Priest (Christ). Only through Christ may we be made perfect. Further study is needed to answer this issue in Leviticus 16. Regardless, a tentative explanation has been outlined below:



Update Notes

As I've developed a deeper understanding of this topic, I've realized that I do not agree with all the things originally noted, and not updating this paper would be a failure to recognize those faults. Hence, I updated this paper in July. In the original conclusions on antitypes made in April, I identified the nature of the courtyard scene to be a recollection of Christ's death on the cross. However, after further consideration, I found typological issues with that idea. Bearing the

sequential nature of Leviticus 16 (esp. 16:20), I had issues with the non-sequential presentation of the courtyard scene the first version had. After thinking about the fact that Christ's atonement did not finish at the cross, this eventually led me to recognize that Christ removing our sins upon his second coming seems to be a strong fulfillment that better answers the courtyard typology. This was a notable topic, and it was clear to me that this needed to be recognized. Furthermore, further research about why the live goat serves as atonement has been added. Moreover, I blended several topics into single sections that were worth separating. There was a need to divide these sections, and doing so led to a more detailed presentation of the topic.

I have updated this paper once more. This version attempts to refine what was added to the last version in several ways. First, much more clarity is now given regarding the fulfillment of the second courtyard scene of the goat, which is pinned on but not fully outlined in the first version. Second, the atonement and typology sections erroneously identified Lev. 16:17/33's atonement for the priesthood and the people with the scapegoat. This has been corrected, and doing so has led to a much more rigorous and fulfilling view of the ritual's atonement. Moreover, this has led to the revelation that there may be further typological fulfillment in the burnt offering atonement, as noted in the preceding section above. Fourth, that section above, "Notable Features for Future Study," documents some important discussions brought forth from this study that are worth future discussion. Fifth, updated information on 1 Enoch has been added. Lastly, various improvements in clarity, formatting, and references have been made.

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