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Lesson 29

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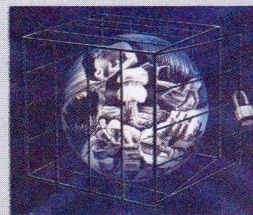
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About Our Cover . . .

For nearly 6,000 years, the world has been held captive by Satan the devil. He has invisibly swayed nations and is ultimately responsible for wars and the misery, hate, suffering and violence that have plagued humanity. But soon, the world will be released from captivity! A new age of peace, happiness and prosperity will blossom forth. Mankind will at long last become *at one* with God. This world's release from captivity is pictured by the Day of Atonement, the fifth of God's seven annual festivals.

Cover and page 3 illustrations by Mike Rider



DAY OF ATONEMENT

The World at One with God

After Jesus Christ returns, what will be the most important step in establishing peace on earth? No major denomination knows the answer. Why? This significant step is pictured by the annual Day of Atonement.

YOU have probably heard that there is a “great controversy” between God and Satan. That Christ and the devil are in a running battle for men’s souls. If this were true, then Satan is winning! More people are “unsaved” today than ever before. Satan, according to this view, is made out to be more powerful than Christ.

But Satan is not stronger than Jesus Christ! Jesus is returning, as He promised, to depose Satan and set up the Kingdom of God. When Christ returns He will not leave this world—its

governments, its societies, its religions, its sports, its economy—in the hands of the devil. Instead of violence and competition, there will be a new era of peace and cooperation.

Greatest Obstacle to World Peace Removed

For nearly 6,000 years Satan has invisibly swayed the nations. He has influenced civilizations, governments and leaders. He has inspired

world wars and helped cause the misery, hate, suffering and violence that have plagued mankind throughout history.

Satan has been this world's ruler ever since God gave him that office when he was known as the Bringer of Light—Heylel in Hebrew or Lucifer in Latin. But Satan's days in that office are numbered.

God is not in competition with Satan—there is no “great controversy”! The question of who will rule this earth has already been decided.

Jesus Christ has qualified to replace Satan. When He returns to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords He will take over the supreme government over this world and *depose* Satan the devil! This world will then have peace at last.

Day of Atonement Pictures Satan's Removal

God's Holy Days were given to remind us how, step by step, God is working out His Master Plan.

The first three festivals—Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Pentecost—picture God's first spiritual harvest, the firstfruits—and their forgiveness, calling, preparation and training before Christ's return.

The last four festivals show the plan God has for making salvation available for all who have not yet been called. The Feast of Trumpets pictures Christ's intervention in human affairs to stop the suicide of the human race in nuclear war. Christ will be swift and firm in punishing those who are destroying the earth.

The fifth annual Sabbath, the Day of Atonement, pictures the fifth step in God's Master Plan—deposing Satan from his position as world

ruler, and his removal to a place completely away from mankind. Satan will be “bound” for 1,000 years, no longer able to deceive the nations or influence mankind to sin (Rev. 20:1-3).

The Day of Atonement is perhaps the most unusual Holy Day, for it is the one day on which God has commanded His people to fast—to abstain from food and drink from sunset to sunset.

Humility Through Fasting

Jesus Christ, the future ruler of earth, qualified to rule by being completely submissive to the government of God and perfectly humble. One of His last acts with His disciples included establishing the New Testament Passover ordinance of foot washing to picture humility. His suffering and death to pay the penalty of human sin was an act of extreme humility, of complete submission to His Father's will, of perfect love for us. True Christians in like manner must become humble to rule with Christ. No ruler in God's Kingdom can be arrogant or selfish (Mark 10:42-45).

Fasting on the Day of Atonement is a vivid reminder of the state of mind necessary for salvation—of humility, godly sorrow, earnestly seeking God and His way.

Today, the world is filled with pomp and pride and does not realize it is cut off from God because of sin (Isa. 59:2)—sin that has been inspired by Satan. Only those few whom God is calling are now reconciled to God. The vast majority must wait. After Satan's imprisonment on a coming Day of Atonement, all humanity will be reconciled with God—made humble and *at one* with Him, as pictured by the Day of At-one-ment. Let's understand the meaning of this unique fifth festival of God.

LESSON 29

Fifth Step in God's Plan

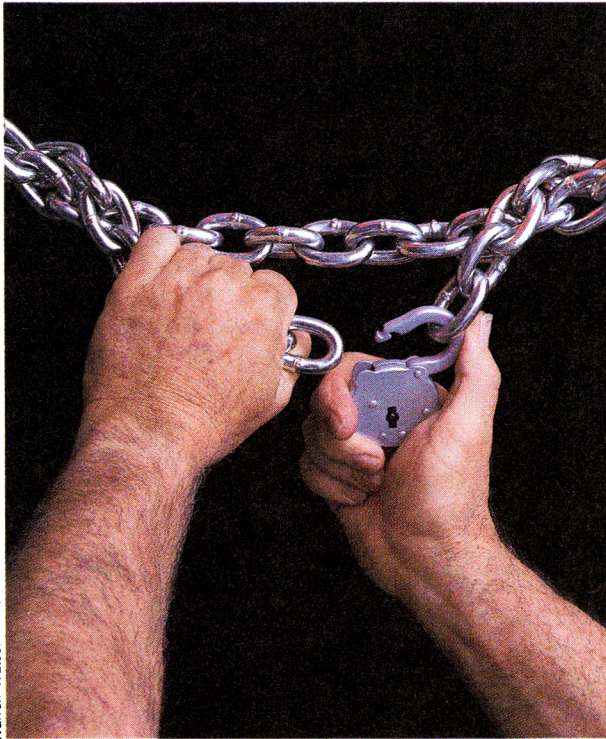
1. After the terrible events pictured in the book of Revelation by six seals and six trumpet plagues, will mankind repent and turn to God? Rev. 9:20-21. Even after the seven last plagues—the wrath of God—will many humans still be rebellious? Rev. 16:10-11, 21.

2. Why won't men and women repent—is it because they have been deceived? Rev. 12:9; 13:11-14. Are they spiritually drunk? Rev. 18:3. Will the army that attempts to fight Christ also be influ-

enced by demons? Rev. 16:13-14. Is Satan himself behind this deception? Note the word *dragon* in verse 13.

3. Does the Bible reveal that today's world is invisibly ruled by Satan and his fallen angels? John 14:30; II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12. However, will the world to come be ruled by angels? Heb. 2:5.

COMMENT: The Bible mentions three worlds—“the world that then was” that perished in a worldwide flood (II Pet. 3:6), “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4), and “the world to come”—the world tomorrow. In the world tomorrow, the devil



SATAN WILL BE “BOUND”—symbolized by a great chain—at Christ’s return and then cast into the “bottomless pit” (Rev. 20:1-3) to prevent him from deceiving the nations for 1,000 years.

and his demons will no longer influence earth’s nations, its societies and religions.

4. Who will replace Satan as earthwide ruler? Rev. 5:12; 19:11-16; Matt. 28:18. Who will replace the demons as rulers over the nations? I Cor. 6:2-3; Rev. 2:26-27; 20:6. Will Satan and the demons figuratively be under the feet of the saints? Rom. 16:20.

5. After Christ returns to enforce the government of God on earth, will Satan be bound with a symbolic chain and locked up to prevent him from deceiving mankind? Rev. 20:1-3. Where will he be cast? Verse 3. Also compare Revelation 18:2 with Isaiah 13:19-22.

Binding of Satan Pictured by Day of Atonement

After Christ returns to restore to earth the government of God, Satan will be completely restrained for 1,000 years. Let’s now see how this fifth step in God’s Master Plan is pictured by a symbolic ceremony in the law of Moses.

1. What annual Sabbath follows nine days after the Feast of Trumpets? Lev. 23:27. Are God’s people commanded to assemble before Him on the Day of Atonement? Same verse; Num. 29:7.

COMMENT: This world’s churches misunderstand most aspects of God’s Holy Days. Almost universally they have not kept these annual reminders of God’s plan, and they thus do not know what God’s plan is. The world has especially misunderstood the symbolism of the Day of Atonement. And no wonder! For this day more than any other Holy Day is hated by the great deceiver because it pictures his defeat.

The 16th chapter of Leviticus details what God commanded the Levitical high priests to do on the Day of Atonement. These rituals, which are no longer performed, pictured the binding of Satan—the fifth step in God’s plan to restore His government on earth and bring the knowledge of salvation to everyone.

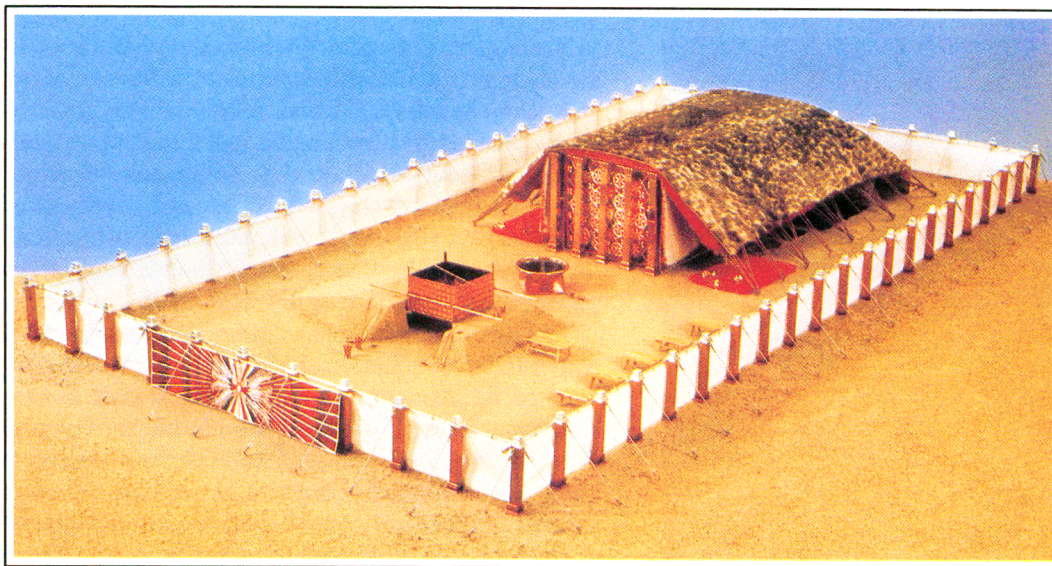
The purpose of the rituals God gave His Levitical priests was to remind the Israelites of their sins, that the penalty for sin was death, and that they would need a Savior to pay their penalty for them. The symbolism of the sacrificial laws was fulfilled by Christ’s death in A.D. 31. Therefore sacrifices need not be offered today, nor can they be, because there is no functioning Levitical priesthood nor is anyone else authorized to perform those physical duties.

Even though the rituals are no longer performed, we can still see their symbolic meanings. But we must first understand a few important details about God’s Tabernacle and the Levitical priesthood.

Once the Israelites had agreed to worship the LORD, Yahweh, the One who became Jesus Christ, (Ex. 24:3), He then began to detail to them *how* He should be worshiped. The first instructions He gave were for His Tabernacle (Exodus, chapters 25-27 and 30). Aaron and his sons were divinely chosen as priests (chapter 28). God’s priests were appointed, not elected. God was in charge.

The Tabernacle included a courtyard enclosed by curtains. In the courtyard were an altar, a laver and a central tent. The tent was divided into two sections by a veil. The section behind the veil was called the Most Holy Place or the Holiest of All (Heb. 9:3). The front section of the tent was the “holy place” (Ex. 26:33).

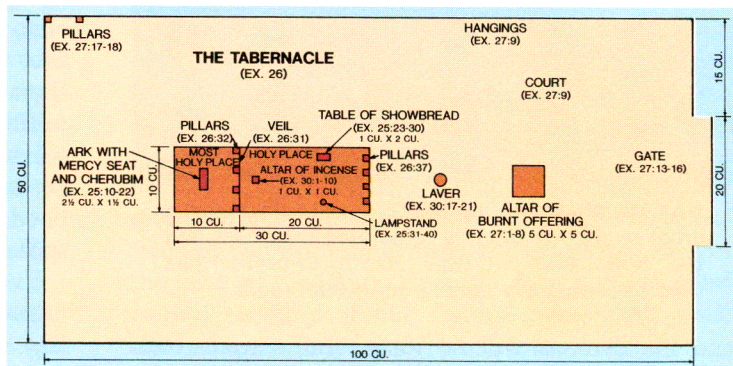
The Most Holy Place in the Tabernacle represented God’s throne in heaven. The Ark of the Covenant, with the wings of the cherubim spread overhead, was in the Most Holy Place (Ex. 25:10-22; 26:33-34). Inside the Ark were the tables of stone on which God had written the Ten Commandments. The lid of the Ark, which was called the mercy seat, was where Yahweh—the One who later became Jesus Christ—manifested Himself.



GOD'S TABERNACLE

Artist's rendering (above) shows the Tabernacle in the form of a model. The Tabernacle contained a physical replica of God's habitation in heaven. It was the Most Holy Place, representing God's heavenly throne, that the high priest entered once a year on the Day of Atonement. At right is a diagram of the layout of the Tabernacle.

Model from The Tabernacle of God in the Wilderness of Sinai by Paul F. Kiene, © 1976 Verlag Hermann Schulte Wetzlar, © 1977 Zondervan Corp. Used by permission. Diagram by Gary Klar.



Only one person—the Levitical high priest—was ever allowed to enter the Most Holy Place. He was allowed to enter it only once each year—only on the Day of Atonement to perform a special ceremony depicting the binding of Satan. God thus emphasized how important this day is. This day is symbolically linked to man's access to God.

Let's go through Leviticus 16 and briefly note the rituals that were to occur on the Day of Atonement. After we get the overview, we'll go back and study the symbolism involved in each step.

1. Was Aaron (and all succeeding high priests) allowed to go behind the veil to the mercy seat as often as he wished? Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:6-7. On which day was he allowed to enter the Most Holy Place? Lev. 16:29-30.

2. Before entering the Most Holy Place, did the high priest have to bathe and dress in special priestly garments? Lev. 16:4. Did he sacrifice a young bull to make atonement for himself? Verses 3, 6, 11.

COMMENT: The sacrifice was done on the altar in the Tabernacle courtyard. No one but the high priest was allowed in the courtyard (verse 17).

This was not a public ceremony—it was between the high priest and God alone.

3. Did the high priest then take a censer full of hot coals from the altar, with his hands full of finely ground incense, and go into the Most Holy Place? Verse 12. What did he do with the censer and incense? Verse 13. What did he sprinkle on the mercy seat? Verse 14.

4. Had the high priest previously taken two goats from the congregation? Verses 5, 7. Did he cast lots to determine what each goat would represent? Verse 8. Was the goat representing the LORD killed as an offering for sin? Verses 9, 15-16.

5. Was the other goat presented alive? Verse 10. Were the sins of the congregation symbolically put onto the live goat? Verse 21. What was then done to this goat? Verse 22.

COMMENT: Bulls, goats and rams were a normal part of the daily sacrificial rituals (Lev. 1:2-5, 10; Num. 28:4, 11, 15). Two things were particularly unusual about the rituals done on the Day of Atonement: 1) the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, and 2) one goat was ceremoniously led into the wilderness. What connection do these rituals have with the fifth step in God's plan—the

restraining of Satan? The answer is made clear in the New Testament book of Hebrews.

Levitical High Priest Represented Our Eternal High Priest

1. Did the innermost part of the physical Tabernacle, made with hands, represent God's heavenly throne, the true throne? Heb. 8:1-2; 9:23-24. Did the priestly ceremonies foreshadow heavenly things? Heb. 8:4-5. Is Jesus Christ now our eternal High Priest? Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1.

COMMENT: The book of Hebrews was written to people familiar with the priestly functions. The writer shows that Christ fulfilled all of their symbolism and has become a high priest of much higher and eternal rank.

There were many Old Testament high priests, because each would eventually die and a new one would be installed (Heb. 7:23). But Christ, being immortal, is now High Priest forever (verse 24). Perfectly sinless, Christ did not have to offer sacrifices for Himself, as the Levitical high priests did (verses 26-27). Thus Christ, in sacrificing His sinless life, could permanently pay for others' sins. After His resurrection to eternal life, He was consecrated as our High Priest forever (verse 28).

It is clear that Aaron and his descendants—the high priests in succeeding generations—pictured Jesus Christ. Their role in the Day of Atonement rituals symbolizes what Christ did in atoning for our sins.

2. Were Aaron and his descendants without sin? Rom. 3:10, 23. Did he therefore have to make sacrifices for his own sins to be able to even temporarily represent Christ? Heb. 7:27; Lev. 16:6.

COMMENT: A sin offering was a sacrifice required from a person who sinned (Leviticus chapters 4 through 7). The sacrifices pictured that the penalty of sin is death. Animal death cannot pay a human penalty (Heb. 10:4)—the sacrifices were only foreshadows picturing Christ's sacrifice. Jesus Christ, God made human, paid the penalty of human sin by His unjust death.

3. What was done with some of the blood of the bullock that was offered as a sin offering? Lev. 16:14. Why? Heb. 9:7, 21-22.

COMMENT: In the Ark of the Covenant beneath the mercy seat were two tables of stone on which were the Ten Commandments. Since these laws had been broken, making the sin offering necessary, the sacrificial blood was sprinkled on and before the Ark, thus symbolically atoning for transgressions of God's eternal spiritual law.

4. Did the high priest's special garments represent righteousness? Rev. 19:8. Did bathing represent a clean heart, a clean conscience? Heb. 10:22.

5. When he went into the Most Holy Place, the high priest created a cloud of sweet incense. What did that represent? Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8; 8:3-4.

COMMENT: This incense pictured prayer. The priest used sweet incense; our prayers are pleasing to God. The incense was beaten fine; we should be detailed in our prayers. Too many people pray for their own personal desires, then end quickly with a generalization like: "And bless everybody else, too." As incense arises from hot coals, so prayers ascend from the righteous like a cloud, bringing God's people mercy and protection.

In Old Testament times, only one person could enter behind the veil once each year. But after Jesus' death, the veil was supernaturally torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:50-51). This symbolically opened the way to God's throne.

We are now allowed direct contact with God the Father through our own prayers, needing no intermediary except Christ (Heb. 10:19-22; John 15:16; 16:23). By using Christ's name, our prayers ascend to God's heavenly throne by the permission and with the authority of our High Priest. This contact was not possible before Christ's resurrection; the ancient Israelites' access was limited to the LORD who became Christ.

Goat Chosen for the LORD

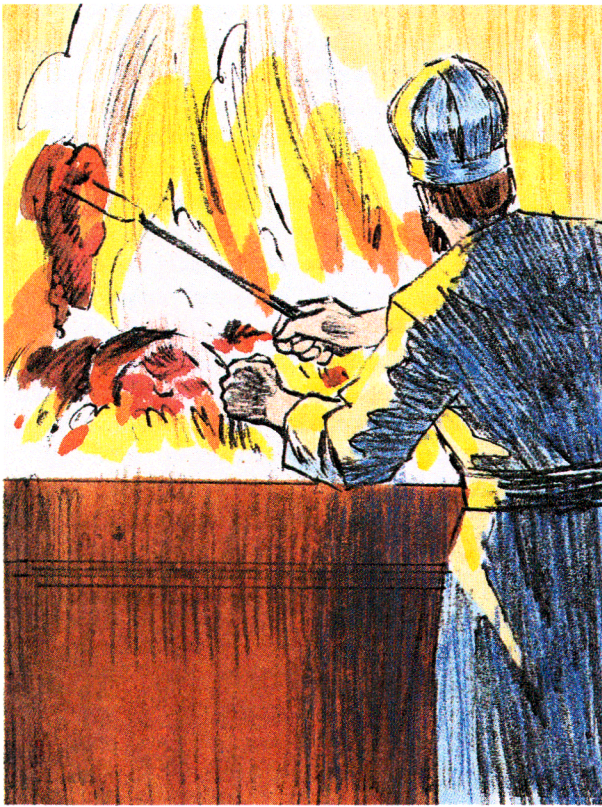
On the Day of Atonement, the high priest took two young goats from the congregation of Israel

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest took two young goats from the congregation of Israel. . . . They were to portray two vastly different symbolic roles.

(Lev. 16:5, 7). The two goats, in physical appearance, were similar. But they were to portray two vastly different symbolic roles.

1. How was it determined which goat would represent which role? Lev. 16:8. What happened to the goat on which the LORD's lot fell? Verse 9.

COMMENT: The LORD who dealt with ancient Israel, as we learned in previous lessons, is the member of the God Family who became Jesus Christ (I Cor. 10:1-4). Therefore this goat, which was sacrificed for a sin offering and whose blood



THE LORD'S GOAT—This goat was sacrificed by the high priest as a sin offering for all Israel. Its blood,

was sprinkled on the mercy seat for an atonement for all Israel, represented Jesus Christ.

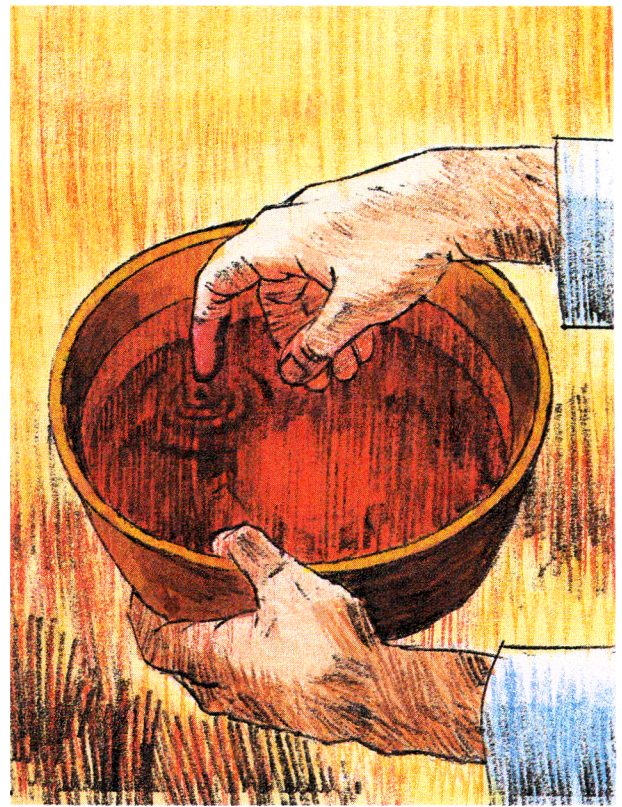
Although the two goats appeared to be alike, one was to typify Christ. Men were utterly unqualified to determine which goat was suitable. Therefore it was necessary for God to decide.

A lot is a solemn appeal to God to supernaturally decide a matter (Prov. 16:33). It is a sacred religious ceremony. Modern lotteries profane this ancient holy ceremony appealing to God.

Men, without God's supernatural intervention, are unable to determine who represents Christ. Most people who think they worship Christ are actually following ministers who are deceived by the devil (II Cor. 11:13-15). Satan has so deceived the whole world (Rev. 12:9) that mankind as a whole does not know who is God and who is the adversary.

2. Did the high priest sacrifice the goat representing Christ—the goat chosen by lot “for the LORD”—as a sin offering for all the people? Lev. 16:15-16. What did the blood of the sin offering picture? Rom. 3:23-26; Heb. 9:12-14.

COMMENT: The killing of the LORD's goat and sprinkling its blood on the mercy seat pictured the method by which humans can be reconciled to



symbolic of Christ's shed blood, was then sprinkled on the mercy seat.

God—through the sacrifice of an innocent victim. Christ was that victim. He voluntarily took our guilt with Him on His cross, paying the penalty in full. Our guilt is expiated, atoned for; it ceases to exist if we accept Christ as our Savior and quit sinning.

The sins of the people were borne by the goat even as Christ bore our sins on His cross (Heb. 9:28). But Christ rose from the dead, ascended to the throne of God in heaven and shall return.

3. Did the Aaronic high priest, after killing the goat representing Christ, enter the Most Holy Place behind the veil and sprinkle the goat's blood on the mercy seat? Heb. 9:7; Lev. 16:15-16. Was the Most Holy Place an earthly representation of God's heavenly throne? Lev. 16:2; Ex. 25:21-22; Num. 7:89.

COMMENT: The altar, Tabernacle and mercy seat were considered defiled by their presence among the sinning Israelites. All through the year Israel's sins were symbolically transferred to the Tabernacle and its fixtures (Lev. 4:2-7). On the Day of Atonement this guilt was symbolically purged from the nation so God would continue to dwell with Israel. The goat's blood symbolized the blood of Christ.



Illustrations by Ken Tunell

THE AZAZEL GOAT—It was on the head of this goat, representing Satan, that the sins of Israel were

4. Did Christ, after His sacrifice and resurrection, enter behind the veil to the throne of God in heaven? Heb. 6:19-20; 8:1; 9:24; I Pet. 3:22. Was it His own blood that He presented as an offering for sin? Heb. 9:11-12.

COMMENT: The high priest, symbolically taking the atoning blood to God's throne, represented and symbolically did the work of the risen Christ.

Both the high priest and the goat represented Christ. It was not possible for the high priest to die every year to picture Christ's death. That had to be symbolized by the goat. Nor could the goat—after it was killed—represent the risen Jesus Christ, our eternal High Priest. The human high priest represented the living, resurrected Christ. That is why he had to be symbolically cleaned so carefully before he could officiate.

5. What has Christ, our High Priest, been doing for more than 1,950 years? Heb. 7:25; 4:14-16; I John 1:9; 2:1-2.

COMMENT: Christ is our *living* Savior. Christ's death has paid the penalty of all human sin. But that in itself did not complete the job of making atonement for all humans. Satan still rules this world, influencing everyone. The vast majority do not believe in Christ's sacrifice and do not obey God.



placed. Azazel was then led into the wilderness, symbolically carrying their sins with him.

How will the job of atonement be completed? How will all mankind eventually be made at one with God the Father? The answer is revealed through the symbolism of the live goat.

Goat Led into the Wilderness

An unusual feature of the Day of Atonement rituals was the goat led alive into the wilderness. Who or what did this goat represent? Why wasn't it killed? What significance did the wilderness have?

When the priest went behind the veil into the Most Holy Place, he symbolized Christ ascending to God's throne in heaven. The work he did in the Most Holy Place symbolized Christ's work for more than 1,950 years. When the priest came out, he symbolized *Christ's return to earth*. What did the high priest then do—and what will Christ do after He returns?

1. After the Levitical high priest had sacrificed one goat and completed his work inside the Tabernacle, did he seize the other goat? Lev. 16:20. Did the priest symbolically place the sins of the people on the head of this goat? Verse 21.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ atoned for our sins

when He took the penalty of our sins upon Himself by sacrificing His sinless life for us. When we repent of our sins, our past debt ceases to exist. The sins of the people were symbolically atoned for by the sacrificed goat (Lev. 16:15). So what are the sins placed on the head of the live goat? The key to the explanation—and the symbolic meaning of this Holy Day—lies in correctly understanding who or what this goat represented.

2. The goat chosen by lot for the LORD represented Christ. Who was the other goat to represent? Verse 8. Was it to be banished? Verse 10.

COMMENT: The English word *scapegoat* is not a correct translation of the Hebrew word God inspired. The original word was *azazel*. *Azazel*,

When Jesus Christ returns, Satan's part of the blame for mankind's sins will be placed on him, and he will then be removed from the presence of man. Justice will be done.

among the early Semitic dwellers in the Sinai desert, referred to Satan the devil! James Moffatt therefore translated this as "Azazel the demon."

William Gesenius wrote this: "This name was used for that of an evil demon. . . . The name *Azazel* . . . is also used by the Arabs as that of an evil demon" (*Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon*, page 617). "The devil, named Eblis in the Koran, was once one of the archangels in heaven, and was called *Azazil*, but by disobedience fell" (J.W.H. Stobart, *Islam and Its Founder*, page 114).

Hermann Schultz wrote: "*Azazel* is . . . an Aramaic . . . name for an unclean and ungodlike power, which has its abode in the wilderness, in the accursed land outside the sacred bounds of the camp" (*Old Testament Theology*, translated by Paterson, 1892, vol. 1, page 405).

"The high priest . . . cast lots upon the two goats. One was to be for the Lord for a sin-offering. The other was for *Azazel* (the completely separate one, the evil spirit regarded as dwelling in the desert), to be sent away alive into the wilderness" (F. Watson, *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, 1893, page 161.)

Modern commentaries often misunderstand this *azazel* goat. This is not too surprising, since Satan has deceived the whole world, and deceived many into thinking he does not exist. Some commentators claim that this *azazel* goat represents Christ. Such theories have no biblical or symbolic support.

Let's notice a modern Jewish commentary that makes it clear that the *azazel* goat represented Satan the devil: "*Azazel* . . . was probably a demonic being. . . . Apocryphal Jewish works, composed in the last few centuries before the Christian era, tell of angels who were lured . . . into rebellion against God. In these writings, *Azazel* is one of the two leaders of the rebellion. And posttalmudic documents tell a similar story about two rebel angels, *Uzza* and *Azzael*—both variations of the name *Azazel*. These mythological stories, which must have been widely known, seem to confirm the essentially demonic character of the old biblical *Azazel*" (Union of American Hebrew Congregations, *The Torah—a Modern Commentary*, page 859).

The word *scapegoat* carries a wrong connotation. Originally it meant "escape goat"—the goat that was allowed to escape. But today the word *scapegoat* signifies "one who bears blame or guilt for others." This is definitely not the meaning that God inspired. *Azazel*—Satan—bears his own guilt in deceiving mankind. Satan is not a scapegoat for another's sins. He will be punished for his own guilt.

The real cause—the actual author—of human sin is Satan the devil (John 8:42-44; Eph. 2:2). Satan is guilty of inspiring the sins of mankind. Christ paid the penalty for our part in every sin we repent of. But He did not pay for Satan's part in these sins, or the sins of the other demons. Demons are not offered salvation, and they refuse to repent! So here, in this Levitical ritual, all of man's Satan-inspired sins were symbolically put back on Satan's head, where they belong!

When Jesus Christ returns, Satan's part of the blame for mankind's sins will be placed on him, and he will then be *removed* from the presence of man. Justice will be done.

3. Was the *azazel* goat sent away from all mankind carrying his sins with him? Lev. 16:21-22. Does the wilderness to which the goat was taken represent the land of ruins that modern "Babylon" will become? Read Isaiah 13:19 through 14:23.

COMMENT: Satan, the instigator of sin, is guilty of inspiring our sins, and his guilt cannot be atoned for. His sins are placed on his own account, and then he and his sins are sent away—completely removed from the presence of God and God's redeemed children!

Satan's power over mankind is through deception and sin. Through Christ's redeeming sacrifice, we have been bought back, purchased, ransomed from the spiritual kidnapper. Satan has lost his

claim to ownership, and he will be prevented from exercising that influence for 1,000 years. No longer will he be an adversary or an accuser of the brethren. Mankind as a whole cannot be fully atoned—"at one" with God—until this is done.

4. After coming in contact with the *azazel* goat, did the high priest have to wash himself again before coming in contact with the people? Lev. 16:24. And did the man who led the goat away have to wash his clothes and bathe before coming into the camp? Verse 26.

COMMENT: The symbolism is certainly that of having come in contact with the devil!

5. Is the *azazel* goat pictured as remaining alive? Verses 10, 22.

COMMENT: Satan is a spirit being and therefore immortal (Luke 20:35-36). To signify that, the goat was permitted to live. But notice that it was turned loose only when completely removed. This represents Satan being prevented from influencing mankind after Christ's return.

Notice the fulfillment of this part of God's Master Plan, as revealed in the book of Revelation.

6. What will be done to Satan after the Second Coming of Christ? Rev. 20:1-2. Where will he be cast? Verse 3. Also notice Revelation 18:1-2.

COMMENT: The "bottomless pit" or abyss was pictured by the desert wilderness where the *azazel* goat was banished. Satan and his demons will be chained by an angel of God (who was symbolized by the man mentioned in Leviticus 16:21). He will be completely prevented from further leading mankind into sin. No longer will Satan be able to broadcast his evil attitudes.

Fasting on Day of Atonement

The Old Testament observances so far studied were ritualistic. Only the high priest and a few assistants were involved in performing them. But the whole population or congregation of Israel also had a part of its own to play. That part is to fast and abstain from work on the Day of Atonement.

What connection is there between the removal of Satan and our fasting? Satan works in humans by appealing to the lusts of our flesh and the pride of life (I John 2:16). Fasting denies our fleshly lusts and humbles us—thus fasting should diminish Satan's influence in our personal lives—picturing in each of us Satan's eventual complete suppression and removal from all mankind.

1. How are we to observe the Day of Atonement? Lev. 16:29, 31; 23:28-32. How should one "afflict" his body on this day? Isa. 58:3; Ezra 8:21.

COMMENT: "Afflict" is translated from the He-

brew word *anah*, which means "to be afflicted, to humble oneself, to oppress, to depress, to fast." God inspired the same Hebrew word in Deuteronomy 8:2-3: "You shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to *humble* you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He *humbled* you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna . . . that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD" (NKJ). The purpose of afflicting our souls on the Day of Atonement is to *humble* ourselves before God (Ps. 35:13).

2. Does the Bible command fasting on this day "forever"—"throughout your generations"—and "in all your dwellings"? Lev. 23:29-32. Was fasting commanded for the entire congregation—even for Gentiles who wanted to worship God? Lev. 16:29.

COMMENT: The Levitical rituals, even though they clearly picture the meaning of the Day of Atonement, are no longer performed (Heb. 9:8-14; 10:1-4, 10-14). But God's Church does fast on this annual Holy Day.

Why are the sacrifices obsolete, yet the fasting is not? The difference between them is that the rituals were commanded to be performed by the priests as a type of the sacrifice of the death of Messiah or Christ, but fasting was commanded for the entire congregation.

God commanded His people to fast on the Day

The purpose of afflicting our souls [fasting] on the Day of Atonement is to humble ourselves before God.

of Atonement. God's people today obey Him. True Christians are spiritual Israelites, and they obey the commands God gave to all His people. All God's people refrain from work on His Sabbaths; they gather for worship and fellowship on His holy convocations. All true Christians, like all Israelites, should not eat unleavened bread during that festival and should fast on the Day of Atonement.

3. In the Bible, does fasting for spiritual reasons mean going without both food and water? Ex. 34:28; Deut. 9:18; Esth. 4:16; Acts 9:8-9. At what time of day should we begin fasting for the Day of Atonement? Lev. 23:32.

COMMENT: In God's calendar, every day begins at sunset (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19). We should fast on the 10th day of God's seventh month. We should not eat an unusually heavy meal just before sunset on the ninth day of the month in an attempt to defeat the intent of God's command.

Should children fast? If they are old enough to understand that God requires it on this day, they can be taught to fast for perhaps 12 or 18 hours before allowing them to fast 24 hours.

God's law permits certain persons to be exempted from fasting. One category would be persons advised by a medical doctor that it would be physically harmful for them to fast. Babies should never be forced to fast. Most mothers produce enough milk to continue breast feeding throughout a fast day, but some do not. A few may find it necessary to drink a little water to resume feeding. People with medical conditions may need to continue their medication. They would be well advised to check with their family doctor. Diabetics may need to adjust their medication or drink some juices. The government God instituted in His Church empowers the Church to make such exception when necessity demands.

4. Did the New Testament Church keep the Day of Atonement? Acts 27:9.

COMMENT: All biblical scholars know that "the fast" refers to the Day of Atonement. The evangelist Luke wrote this more than 30 years after Christ's crucifixion. If the Day of Atonement no longer existed, God would not have inspired those words!

The early New Testament Church of God set

The word atonement means "to make at one with." This day symbolizes God and man being set at one.

the example for God's Church today. And the true Church of God today keeps all of God's Holy Days—including the fast of the Day of Atonement!

5. Does the Day of Atonement differ from other Holy Days in that no work of any kind is to be done on it? Lev. 16:29; 23:30-31.

COMMENT: All "servile" work—all physical or mental labor associated with earning a living—is prohibited on all weekly and annual Sabbaths. Minor work required for food preparation is allowed for the other feasts (e.g., Ex. 12:16)—but not on the Day of Atonement. Because no food should

be eaten on this day, there is no need for food preparation.

Though a day of fasting, the Day of Atonement, since it is a commanded religious assembly, is a spiritual feast of God's Word. We must not live by bread alone.

We should not mourn as we fast and afflict our souls on the Day of Atonement. Though we sorrow for sin and its results, we can rejoice that God will, in His plan, completely eliminate it (Rev. 21:4). Though we may feel physically weak by our fast, we can be thrilled with the hope of eternal life. The Day of Atonement, like all of God's Holy Days, is a time of hope and rejoicing.

6. Why is this day kept so solemnly? Lev. 23:28.

COMMENT: The word *atonement* means "to make at one with." This day symbolizes God and man being set *at one*: literally the Day of *At-one-ment*!

7. The fact that an atonement is needed shows that man is not yet "at one" with God. Why not? Isa. 59:2; Ps. 66:18.

COMMENT: All of us have sinned (Rom. 3:23). We have become separated from God. Our need for reunification—atonement—with God is emphasized by the word *atonement* appearing 49 times in the book of Leviticus. However, God and mankind cannot be fully at one, in full agreement, until Satan is restrained.

8. The Day of Atonement pictures Satan's defeat worldwide. How does James say we can defeat Satan in our individual lives? Jas. 4:6-7, 10.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ conquered Satan, thus qualifying to rule the world, through fasting (Matt. 4:1-11). Jesus was weak physically. But He was at His strongest spiritually, because He was completely humble. He did not rely on His human strength nor on human wisdom or words. He answered Satan with God's Word. He relied on God's strength—the power of God's Spirit in Him. So can we!

9. Was the Day of Atonement the beginning of a time of release in ancient Israel? Lev. 25:9-10.

COMMENT: The Jubilee Year was given to the Israelites so their poor might be released from debts they were unable to pay. Every 50th year all debts were pardoned, and those who had sold themselves into slavery were freed. Land lost through poverty was restored to the family originally owning it.

This was done on the Day of Atonement, thus connecting this Holy Day with a release from bondage. This is typical of man's future Atonement release from spiritual bondage—release from all spiritual debts and sins—freedom from the



Nathan Faulkner—A.C.

SPIRITUAL FEAST—Feasting on God’s Word, rather than physical food, on the Day of Atonement helps God’s people draw closer to Him.

temptations and deceptions of Satan and his demons—and of the restoration to each nation of its own God-ordained land (Acts 17:26).

The Spiritual Reasons for Fasting

The Day of Atonement should not be the **ONLY** day on which true Christians fast. Except for those with unusual medical limitations, all Christians should occasionally fast on days of their own choosing. Why? To defeat Satan in their lives at all seasons of the year, and to draw closer to God, becoming more at one with Him year-round.

1. Did Christ’s disciples fast when Jesus was with them in person? Matt. 9:14. Did Jesus state that there would come a time when they *would* fast? Verse 15. Did Jesus give instructions on **HOW** to fast? Matt. 6:16-18.

COMMENT: Fasting should not be a “show”—it is not a proof of spirituality. The effectiveness of fasting is between us and God. How often and how long we fast should rarely be mentioned.

2. Did Jesus fast for an extended period? Matt. 4:2.

COMMENT: Jesus, since He never broke a single law of health, was in perfect health and strength. We are not. None of us should try to fast 40 days.

To do so would be extremely damaging to our health, even life-threatening, and therefore a sin.

Those who are older, and those with known physiological problems such as diabetes or heart weaknesses, should seek medical advice. Some, unfortunately, cannot fast for even one day. If you have any doubts, ask competent advice. Don’t assume that God will bless you if you self-righteously insist on endangering your health through an unwise fast!

3. Did Paul, supernaturally struck down, fast while waiting to learn God’s will? Acts 9:6, 9. Did he later fast often? II Cor. 11:27. Are we to follow his example? I Cor. 11:1.

COMMENT: Biblical examples teach us that during a spiritual fast one should neither eat nor drink. It is more humbling than merely going without food, or as some denominations teach, going only without meat.

Many have noticed that there are certain health benefits associated with fasting. This is true *when done in moderation*. During some illnesses, the body will enforce its own fast through vomiting and diarrhea. In such cases, one should drink plenty of fluids to avoid the dangers of dehydration. During fasts for *health* reasons, water or juices are often drunk. One should not confuse health fasting with fasting for spiritual reasons.

Fasting is not a natural desire, and it is sometimes unpleasant. Some people needlessly suffer from headaches when fasting. These are sometimes from caffeine addiction. Some have found it helpful to stop drinking coffee, tea or colas, several days before they begin fasting. This helps them to get such headaches over with before they begin fasting. Thus during their fast they are able to concentrate better on the real purpose of fasting—to get closer to God, to think more like He thinks.

A fast should be more than simple hunger and thirst. We must see beyond the physical, and learn spiritual principles. We must not live by physical bread alone, but seek spiritual food (John 4:34; 6:26-27, 32-35, 50-51). We should hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt. 5:6).

Fasting should help us get closer to God, to spend more time studying His Word, more time in prayer and meditation, striving to learn God's will, desiring to *obey*. Fasting should humble us to help us be willing to yield to God's will—whether it be according to our own desires or not.

Fasting shows us how dependent we are on food and water. It reveals how much we love ourselves, and how difficult it is to give up some of self! When we get hungry, we find that we are very carnal minded. Fasting is a test to see which we will put first—will it be the lust of the flesh or the sincere desire to get closer to God?

When you fast is up to you to decide. Some wait for a convenient day, but fasting is rarely convenient. It is something you must *make* time for—setting aside physical pursuits and dedicating the day to spiritual pursuits. The time you dedicate to get closer to your Creator is pleasing to Him. He knows it is good for us.

It is not wrong to fast on an occasional Sabbath, but a fast is spiritually more profitable on a day without interruptions. Sacrifice your time; make room in your life for God. Whether you have drifted away from God or want to avoid drifting away, get closer to God—fast!

4. On what kind of person will God look with favor? Isa. 66:2. Did Jesus teach that those who humble themselves will be exalted? Luke 14:11.

COMMENT: Fasting helps us realize how small and weak we are, and how much we need God. A little hunger proves to us that we, like Job, are no more than puny, insignificant little creatures (Job 25:6). Without God, we are worth no more than an animal. But with God, we are of infinitely greater value!

Fasting is not self-punishment. Any punishment that we may deserve has already been paid in full by Jesus' suffering and death. Nor is fasting a hunger

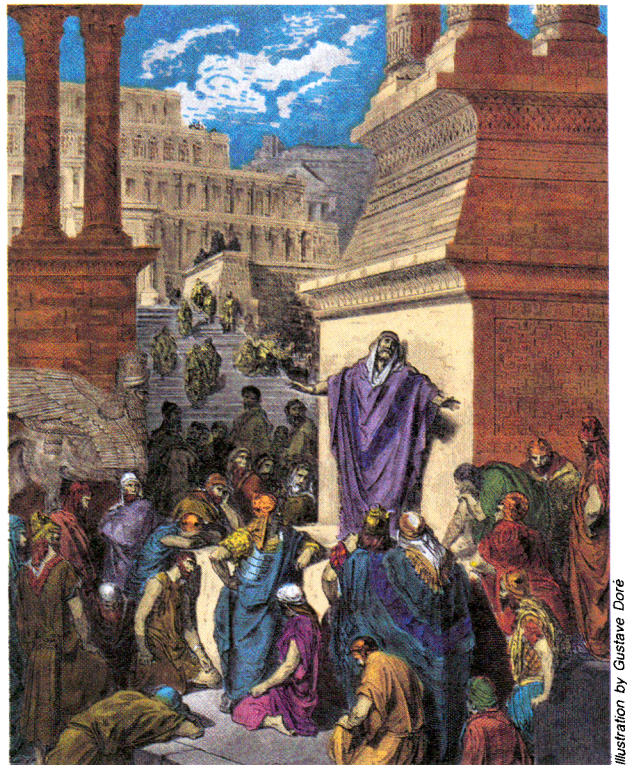


Illustration by Gustave Doré

EXAMPLE OF FASTING—Because the Ninevites humbled themselves by fasting after hearing Jonah's preaching, God spared their city.

strike to force our will on God. We should fast to humble ourselves, draw closer to God and accept *His* will. Fasting should help us acknowledge our own nothingness and realize our need for God's strength.

True humbling is repentance, not penance. A humble person is willing to admit his own way is wrong. He is willing to seek God's way—to ask for God's help, guidance and instructions. Note the examples of the Israelites (I Sam. 7:3-7), King David (Ps. 35:13), Ahab (I Kings 21:17-29), the Ninevites (Jonah 3:3-10), and the Jews (II Chron. 20:3-4; Neh. 9:1-2).

5. What does God say our attitude should be during a fast? Ezra 8:21; Isa. 58:6-7; Joel 2:12-13; Zech. 7:5-7. Have God's servants fasted to learn God's will? Acts 9:9; Dan. 9:3; Acts 13:2-3.

COMMENT: Fasting is an excellent time to examine ourselves spiritually, to recognize our shortcomings and overcome them. Fasting, when done in a right attitude, will help us submit to God's will, to become more at one with Him, to accept His answer to our prayers, to have greater faith, to better resist Satan's temptations.

6. Did Paul give instructions about fasting in connection with marital relations? I Cor. 7:5.

COMMENT: God created sexual relations as a normal and enjoyable part of marriage. (For more

information on this subject, request a copy of our free soft-cover book *The Missing Dimension in Sex*.) Paul told the Corinthian Christians that neither husbands nor wives should defraud the other by refusing sexual relations (verses 3-4). But Paul did say they could abstain—only temporarily—if both agreed. As an example of why they might wish to temporarily refrain, Paul mentioned fasting and prayer. The Bible does not *prohibit* sexual relations during a fast, but Paul did *permit* abstinence if both agreed (verse 6).

The World After Satan's Removal

Upon Christ's return to earth in power and glory, He will order Satan bound. No longer will Satan be able to work in the "children of disobedience." The minds of men, formerly kept spiritually closed by Satan, will be opened by the Spirit of God! Freed from Satan's influence, the world will become responsive to God's way of life.

For the first time, humanity as a whole will be able to understand God's Master Plan of salvation. People will then begin to realize their wrong ways, repent and receive forgiveness of their sins by accepting Christ as their Savior. Only then will man become *at one* with Christ and the Father, as pictured by the Day of *At-one*-ment!

1. What did the Apostle Peter proclaim would occur when Christ returns to earth? Acts 3:19-21.

COMMENT: Peter called the time when God's government will be restored—the time when Satan's part in sins will be put on his own head—the "times of restitution." What needs to be restored to earth? God's government and His way of life. It was once offered to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but they rejected it, deceived by the serpent.

The world needs obedience to God—faith instead of skepticism—reliance on the superior wisdom and experience of the Creator instead of human wisdom. We must do away with reasonings, feelings, desires and emotions based on the pulls of the flesh when it comes to obeying God.

The first step for the establishment of a utopia on earth is the reinstatement of God's authority, with enforcement of God's law through a worldwide system of perfectly righteous kings, mayors, judges, etc. (Luke 19:17, 19; Rev. 5:10).

At-one-ment will not be complete with merely putting Satan away. The greatest task will be yet remaining. People will still be hating one another. Man's mind, man's nature, must be refashioned—his character reshaped and remolded until it becomes "at one" with God.

2. What will be the attitude of Israel and Judah "in that time"? Jer. 31:9, 34; 50:4-5. Have they been misled by their shepherds—their pastors? Jer. 50:6. Is this Azazel's fault, through his ministers? II Cor. 11:13-15. But "in that time," the Millennium, will Israel and Judah have any more sin? Jer. 50:20.

COMMENT: God says, "I will pardon them whom I reserve"—those whom He brings alive through the Great Tribulation and the Day of the Lord. There will be at-one-ment between God and the Israelites. Their terrible national punishments will have brought them to repentance.

3. Will the nations of Israel have any more disagreements or jealousies? Isa. 11:13. When they see Israel's right example, will many of the Gentile nations want to follow the example set by Israel? Deut. 4:6-8; Eph. 2:11-16.

4. After Satan and his demons are put away, will some of their deception and false way of life still affect some people for a little while? Zech. 14:17-19; Ezek. 38:1-14. Will the war prophesied in Ezekiel 38 occur after the beginning of Christ's Kingdom on earth? Verses 8, 11, 14.

COMMENT: Meshech and Tubal are peoples of northern Eurasia, as are Gog and Magog; Gomer and Togarmah are other Central Asiatic peoples. These are a large portion of the human race. As nations that have been taught atheism in this age before Christ's rule, they will at first have to be *forced* through circumstances and events into obeying an everliving God.

What a blessing it will be when Satan is bound! Freed from spiritual captivity, the whole world will be taught God's way to real peace, harmony and salvation.

5. Will God deal severely to show them He is God? Ezek. 39:1-7. What will the Gentiles say when they have learned the truth—and realize at last how the father of lies (John 8:44) has deceived them? Will they forsake the way of their ancestors? Jer. 16:19.

COMMENT: What a blessing it will be when Satan is bound! Freed from their spiritual captivity, the whole world will be taught God's way to real peace, harmony and salvation (Isa. 11:9). How refreshing!

In our next lesson, we'll learn more about the tremendous blessings that will come when the entire world lives in harmony with God's laws.

Many Students Have Asked

“What happens if I ask for a visit?”



The Worldwide Church of God has ministers and trained representatives ready to help you if you should ask. If you were to ask for a visit, what would happen?

Most requests for personal visits come to us through the mail, but many people, especially in North America, use the telephone instead of writing.

Whether your request comes by phone or mail, our procedure is the same. The message is sent immediately to our Personal Correspondence Department.

Quickly—usually by return mail—a letter will be sent to you, informing you of the phone number of the authorized representative closest to your home. This representative will normally be the minister who is pastoring the local congregation of the Worldwide Church of God.

You should call him as soon as possible and arrange a time that is

mutually convenient for the visit, which will usually take place in your own home but elsewhere if you prefer.

The Visit

Who will come? The minister himself, probably. He is trained and competent to answer your Bible questions and to help you with any personal counsel you may desire. He will be accompanied either by his wife, another minister or a senior member of the local congregation.

They will not be coming to argue religion with you or pry into your personal affairs. They will not try to get you to join something, nor will they have anything to sell.

Usually they will plan to spend about an hour with you, for they have a busy schedule and many people to see. If you have many questions and think you may need more time, you should let our representative know when you first contact him so that he can plan his schedule accordingly.

Our men will not be wearing strange clothes, nor will they embarrass you in any way. They will concentrate on answering your questions and just getting to know you.

If you should want more contact—and there are some subjects (like baptism, for instance) that you and the minister will need more than one visit to thoroughly discuss—then our ministers will be pleased to schedule further appointments.

Don't Be Afraid To . . .

So if you have wondered about asking for a personal visit from one of God's true ministers, don't be afraid to.

Don't be concerned that your home is "not nice enough." Don't be afraid that you will be "getting involved," or that pressure will be put on you to join something.

None of these things will happen. What will happen is that you will meet decent, friendly people who will consider it a privilege to help you in any way they can.