

Azazel in Leviticus 16:26

Tuesday, 05 May 2009

The question: To what does the word Azazel refer to in Leviticus 16:26?

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We have to remember that the nation Israel, at that stage, were busy roaming in the desert and that many of the rules, regulations and customs relate to that period.

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The custom according to the context of Leviticus 16 was to get 2 goats ready for the sacrificial ceremony that was to be performed by the Priest, on behalf of the people, to cleanse them of sin. The Priest would slaughter and then sacrifice one goat on the altar - the price for the sin. The Priest would then bend over the other goat (the scapegoat), and place the sin of the people on it. Then the goat - the carrier of the sin - would be taken to Azazel. Azazel is the desert devil. In other words it was symbolic of sending the sin back to where it came from. The goat was then released in the desert. The person releasing the goat, because he had contact with the goat, had to wash himself and his clothes before he could return back to the camp.

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So, in short: Azazel = the desert devil.

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Other symbolisms that is used in the Bible:

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He removes our sins so far as the East is from the West - Psalm 103

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He throws the sin into the depths of the sea, "No Fishing Allowed!"

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True love doesn't keep track of anger - 1 Corinthians 13