

A Tale of Two Goats, The Perfect Alibi

A Closer Look at the Book of Leviticus



Original photo source: unknown

Read Leviticus 16:7-10

Need a scapegoat? (An innocent someone or something to shift the blame on.) God knows we all need a scapegoat, so He provided us with the perfect alibi...

In Leviticus chapter 16 we find a tale of two goats. Leviticus 16:7-10 tell us that the high priest was to cast lots on two goats (kind of like drawing straws). One goat was sacrificed for the sins of the people and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies. The other goat was set free outside the city wall, this was the *scapegoat*.

God has a purpose in every detail, even when it comes to two goats. He is merciful and good and He not only covers our sin with His own blood, but reassures our weak hearts by telling us that He throws our sins away – into the depth of the ocean (Micah 7:19) and as far as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12). This was the picture He was painting with these two goats.

Look up More

1 John 1:7; Eph. 1:7; Heb. 9:22; Rev. 1:5; 1 John 3:20

Additional verses / notes:

Goat #1 was sacrificed and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat.

As severe as this may seem, sacrifices demonstrated the severity and result of sin. The Bible tells us that sin brings forth death (James 1:15) and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness or remedy (Hebrews 9:22).

This goat's blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat. This is significant! Why? Because the mercy seat was on top of the Ark of the Covenant where the Ten Commandments (the law) was kept. Mercy "covered" the law. We need mercy through Jesus' blood to cover the law that we have broken.

Like Israel, we broke the law and needed a sacrifice. Jesus paid the price and His blood covers our sins. He was the perfect sacrifice, fulfilling the law, and provided us mercy.

Look up More James 1:15; Heb. 9:22; Rom. 3:23;
Heb. 9:12-14; Matt. 5:17; Matt. 26:28;
Rom. 10:4; Rom. 4:7

Additional verses / notes:

We all need a Scapegoat. This was Goat #2.

This goat represents a sweet picture of God's abundant mercy! Who would think a goat could paint such a precious picture of our life in Christ – but here it is!

Leviticus 16:21, 22 says,

And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear on him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited...

This is exactly what Jesus has done for us. Jesus is our scapegoat. All our blame was shifted onto Him.

*Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed.
1 Peter 2:24*

The high priest was to lay his hands on the head of the goat and confess all the sins of the people. Symbolically the goat would then carry all of the people's sins away into the wilderness.

The Bible tells us,

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

We don't have to look to a symbolic goat to see our forgiveness – we can look to Jesus! He doesn't symbolically carry our sins away, He bore them. If we confess them, He forgives them. He was the scapegoat that all our sins were placed on.

Look up More

Ps. 130:3, 4, 8; Isa. 53:5; John 1:17;
Rom. 4:25; 2 Cor. 5:17; Heb. 10:17

Additional verses / notes:

You see, Jesus is the very essence of the entire Bible. The Old Testament points to Him and the New Testament reveals Him. Even here in the tale of two goats – we are given a picture of Jesus!