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THE 'AZAZEL' GOAT OF LEVITICUS 16 PICTURES SATAN'S FATE

In Leviticus 16:8 we read ...

And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for THE SCAPEGOAT (Hebrew is "AZAZEL"). (Leviticus 16:8)

The word "Azazel" is a composite word formed from parts of two other Hebrew words. These two words are:

- "EZ", which in turn is derived from AZAZ, meaning: strong, hard, obstinate;
- "AZAL" meaning: to go away, to disappear, to depart.

This word "Azazel" is only used three times in the Old Testament, all three times in Leviticus 16. Putting the meanings of the words it is derived from together, we get the following meaning:

AZAZEL means: the strong and obstinate one (who is destined) to go away and disappear.

AND THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS ACCOUNT!

In Ezekiel 28:16 we read about Satan ...

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I WILL DESTROY THEE, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. (Ezekiel 28:16)

This is not a correct translation. The words "I will destroy you" are a translation of the Hebrew verb "ABAD". This verb is defined as follows in Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament:

1) to be lost, to lose oneself, to wander; used of a lost and wandering sheep; to flee away in the desert, as a wild beast, and there to disappear as it were; it is also used of things such as rivers which disappear in the desert;

2) to perish, to be destroyed;

3) to be ready to perish;

The word "abad" has the meaning "to be lost" or "to wander away", rather than "to destroy". In English we tend to think of "destroy" as meaning: "to ruin the structure, organic existence or condition of something; to demolish; to put out of existence; to neutralize; to annihilate; etc." (see Webster's 7th Collegiate Dictionary). But this is NOT what the Hebrew word "abad" conveys. To demonstrate this point, consider the following uses of "abad". I have rendered the translation of "abad" in capital letters for

easier recognition.

I have gone astray like a LOST sheep; seek thy servant; for I do not forget thy commandments.
(Psalm 119:176)

My people HATH BEEN LOST sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away [on] the mountains: they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their restingplace. (Jeremiah 50:6)

The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up [that which was] broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which WAS LOST; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. (Ezekiel 34:4)

I will seek that which WAS LOST, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up [that which was] broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. (Ezekiel 34:16)

As can be seen from the above verses, the word is readily used to describe "lost" sheep, sheep that have "wandered away". These sheep are still alive and they have not at all been "destroyed", as we see the word "destroyed" defined in Webster's Dictionary. They are only "lost".

Applying this understanding of the Hebrew word "abad" to Ezekiel 28:16, we see the following:

In Ezekiel 28:16 God is telling us that Satan's fate is TO BE DRIVEN AWAY, TO BE LOST by wandering in places of desolation for ever. This future destiny for Satan and the demons is illustrated very succinctly by what happens to the Azazel goat on the Day of Atonement.

So understand this:

It is not a matter that the Hebrew verb "abad" does not mean "to destroy". This verb can be used in the same way we would use the word "destroy" in English. BUT it certainly does not always require "total destruction". The above examples make quite clear that this word ALSO is used when it means nothing more than "DRIVEN AWAY" or "LOST". And the instructions for the Azazel goat in Leviticus 16 show that the meaning of "abad" in Ezekiel 28:16 must likewise be: to be driven away, to become lost.

OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SATAN'S FATE, being acted out on the Day of Atonement, should help us to realize this.

Another Scripture we should also examine in this regard is Revelation 9:11.

And they had a king over them, [which is] the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue [is] ABADDON, but in the Greek tongue hath [his] name APOLLYON. (Revelation 9:11)

Here we are given two different names for Satan, the one from the Hebrew language and the other from the Greek language.

The Hebrew word "abaddon" is formed from this verb "abad" and thus it means something like "the lost wanderer".

The Greek word "Apollyon" is a word that the Apostle John coined. It is only used once in the New Testament. The word is the active participle of the Greek verb "apollumi". This Greek verb "apollumi" has the same meanings as the Hebrew verb "abad".

Notice how Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament defines this word:

"1) to destroy, i.e. to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin;

2) to destroy, i.e. to lose; USED OF SHEEP STRAYING FROM THE FLOCK;"

Here are two verses which use this Greek verb. I have also rendered the translation of "apollumi" in capital letters for easier recognition.

What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if HE LOSE one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? (Luke 15:4)

And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I SHOULD LOSE nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (John 6:39)

This illustrates that the Greek verb "apollumi" has basically the same meaning as the Hebrew verb "abad". In Revelation 9:11 the Apostle John formed two nouns from two root verbs, one in Hebrew and one in Greek. BOTH of these verbs were commonly used in their respective languages to refer to "sheep that had wandered away and become lost".

The ritual with the Azazel goat on the Day of Atonement acted out this fate, by taking this goat into a totally desolate area and then letting it wander away.

Now let us consider another verse in the New Testament.

Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; WANDERING STARS, TO WHOM IS RESERVED THE BLACKNESS OF DARKNESS FOR EVER. (Jude 1:13)

The key words in this verse are "wandering stars".

The words "wandering stars" are translated from the Greek words "asteres planetai". The word "asteres" is the plural of "aster" which means "star" (hence our English word "astronomy"). The word "planetai" is the plural of the noun "planetes". This noun is only used once in the New Testament, and here translated as "wandering". That doesn't quite convey the correct meaning though.

"Planetes" comes from the noun "planos", which means "DECEIVER" and the verb "planao", which means "TO DECEIVE". To give us some feel for the meaning of this word, consider that this verb "planao" is used 39 times in the New Testament. In the KJV it is translated as follows:

- to deceive = 24x; - be out of the way = 1x; - to err = 6x; - to seduce = 2x

- to go astray = 5x; - to wander = 1x

This should help us to see the meaning of this word quite clearly. It means: TO DECEIVE BY GOING ANOTHER WAY!

Thus the noun "planetes" means:

A DECEIVER WHO LEADS ASTRAY BY GOING ON A DIFFERENT WAY!

This should help us to understand why the Greeks called the planets "planets". You could reliably navigate by the stars; but the planets kept moving and if you tried to chart your course by the planets, then you would go the wrong way. The planets "deceived" you into setting a wrong course. If you rely on them, you will not get to your destination. It is interesting that all of the planets are named after pagan gods.

So back to Jude 1:13. In this verse Jude tells us that Satan and the demons are like "deceiver-stars who lead people astray, and their destiny is to wander through the blackness of darkness for ever".

We started off with looking at the Azazel goat in Leviticus chapter 16. When we put the whole picture together, we see that Leviticus chapter 16 reveals Satan's ULTIMATE DESTINY in two different ways:

- first through the meaning of the word "Azazel";
- secondly through acting out this fate with this "Azazel" goat.

This meaning ties in perfectly with Ezekiel 28:16, with Revelation 9:11 and also with Jude 13.

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