

October 2021

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THE DAY OF ATONEMENT IS NOT "A DAY OF COVERING"

I need to correct something that I have just come to understand correctly. I have over the years on occasion stated something incorrectly. And that "something" concerns the Holy Day of Atonement.

When I came to Ambassador College in the 1960s, I was taught that the Hebrew word for "atonement" means "to cover over", and it was explained that the Day of Atonement represents **the sacrifice of Jesus Christ "covering over our sins"**. It was explained that "Yom Kippur" means "The Day of Covering". The Hebrew noun "kippur" is derived from the Hebrew verb "kaphar", and "kaphar" means "to cover". That's how it was basically explained.

This explanation made sense to me, and I accepted that as correct, without ever personally examining this subject in detail. And so I myself have stated at various times over the years that the Day of Atonement represents "the day when our sins were covered over by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ".

But that is wrong!

When we ask the right questions, then it becomes clear that there is something seriously wrong with the above picture regarding the Day of Atonement. So let me correct the wrong statements which I myself have at times made in the past.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT CEREMONY

We are familiar with the ceremony that involved the two goats, one for Jesus Christ and one for Satan. Satan is in this Atonement Day ceremony identified with the name "Azazel" (see Leviticus 16). That ceremony I have explained in detail in my November 2018 article "Who is the Azazel Goat?".

As we look at that ceremony we need to ask: is there anything at all in that ceremony that has anything at all to do with "covering" anything? Is either goat "covered" in some way? Are the people "covered" in some way? Is the priest "covered" in some way? Or are sins "covered" in that ceremony?

In short: **is anything covered in that ceremony?**

And the answer is: **NO!**

The Day of Atonement is about "**sending away sins**"; it is **not** about "**covering sins**"!

There is a huge difference between covering something and sending that something away. Sins that are only "covered" are sins that **are still there**. Covering does nothing more than **hide something from view**. But hiding something from view doesn't make that something go away.

Hiding something is only a **temporary** solution to any problem. Covered problems can't be seen, but they are still very much there. And **if something is covered over, then the problem that is covered will still need to be dealt with at a later time**. Covering a problem is never a permanent solution.

Now the ceremony on the Day of Atonement does **not** picture a **temporary** solution for the problem of sins. Rather, the Day of Atonement ceremony pictures a solution for the problem of sins that is permanent and irreversible. But covering anything is never irreversible ... it could in the future still be "uncovered".

The Day of Atonement ceremony very clearly represents our sins being forcefully and **permanently removed**. The goat for Azazel is forcefully led away "by the hand of a fit man" (see Leviticus 16:21). There is nothing about "covering" in this particular ceremony. If the sins were only "covered", then the Azazel goat would theoretically have to remain amongst the people of Israel, but just hidden from view.

So the first point which we need to recognize is:

The Day of Atonement ceremony does not in any way support the claim that sins are "covered". This ceremony makes clear beyond question that this day represents sins being forcefully "driven away", not simply hidden from view.

This then brings us to the question:

Okay, if the Day of Atonement ceremony does not support the idea that our sins are "covered over", then **how did we come to accept that idea?** This question leads us to looking at the Hebrew words that are involved.

But when we look at the Hebrew words, then the matter becomes quite technical and potentially somewhat confusing. That is unfortunately something I cannot do anything about. I will try to keep this technical discussion as basic as possible. We'll do this technical assessment in numbered steps.

THE HEBREW WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS

1) In the expression "the Day of Atonement" the word "atonement" is always a translation of the Hebrew noun "**kippur**". The three places where this expression appears in the Old Testament are: Leviticus 23:27-28 and Leviticus 25:9.

2) A Hebrew Dictionary will tell you that "kippur" means "atonement", and it offers no other meanings. It also tells you that the noun "kippur" has been formed from the Hebrew verb "kaphar".

3) When you then look at the verb "**kaphar**" in the Hebrew Dictionary, then things become both interesting and confusing. Here is why.

4) It shows that this verb "kaphar" is used 102 times in the OT. Here are the meanings which the Hebrew Dictionary provides for "kaphar", in the order in which they are listed: "**to cover, purge, make an atonement, make reconciliation, cover over with pitch**".

Notice that "to cover" is the first meaning that is listed, and that "to cover over with pitch" is the last meaning listed. Now when we then look at how the 102 instances of "kaphar" are actually translated in the KJV, then we find that "kaphar" is in fact **never once translated as "to cover"**. Yet that is the first meaning that is listed. And it is **only once translated as "pitch"**. But the word "kaphar" appears 102 times in the OT.

Now how can this Hebrew verb have the first meaning of "to cover", when it never once in 102 places actually means "to cover"? That is confusing.

5) For the record, here is how **those 102 occurrences** are translated in the KJV: "AV: atonement 71, purge 7, reconciliation 4, reconcile 3, forgive 3, purge away 2, pacify 2, atonement ... made 2, merciful 2, cleansed 1, disannulled 1, appease 1, put off 1, pardon 1, pitch 1; 102".

Can we see that none of these words refer to the concept of "to cover"?

Some people may want to focus on the one place (Genesis 6:14) where "kaphar" is translated "pitch". But that creates a challenge. Here is why:

6) Looking at all the ways that those 102 places are translated into English, it should become clear that **"pitch" is really the odd man out** amongst those ways of translating "kaphar". None of the other 101 translations have anything to do with the concept of "pitch".

7) So here is the situation: We can reason that "to pitch something" means "to cover something". In that way we can justify in our minds that "kaphar" must mean something like "to cover". So ... do we make the other 101 occurrences of "kaphar" fit in with this deduced meaning of "to cover"? Or do we recognize that, apart from the one place where it says "pitch", the Hebrew verb "kaphar" doesn't actually have anything to do with "covering"? Does the dog wag the tail, or does the tail wag the dog? What is the situation here?

(Later we'll examine Genesis 6:14 very thoroughly.)

How do we reconcile 101 places with no connection to covering or pitching with the one place where it is translated as "pitch"?

8) This question leads us to a more reliable dictionary for biblical Hebrew words. That is the Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (TWOT). Where the average Hebrew dictionary lists the Hebrew verb "kaphar" under one heading, TWOT in fact lists this verb under **two** distinct headings. TWOT recognizes that we are dealing with **two distinct meanings**, both of which happen to be expressed by "kaphar". These two sets of meanings of "kaphar" (or "kaphar" in TWOT) are listed in TWOT as entries #1023.0 and #1024.0.

The explanations in that scholarly work are somewhat lengthy, but they reveal the problem we are dealing with here. I will quote those entries verbatim, with the only change being that I will **bold** some words in the quotations for emphasis.

9) Here is TWOT entry #1023.0.

(kaphar) I, make an atonement, make reconciliation, purge. (Denominative verb.) **This root should probably be distinguished from kaphar II 'to smear with pitch.'**

Parent Noun

(1023a) ... **(koper) I**, ransom, gift to secure favor.

(1023b) ... *(kippur)* (used in the plural *kippurîm*) atonement, used especially in the expression 'day of atonement.'

(1023c) *(kapporet)* place of atonement; KJV, 'mercy seat.'

The **root kaphar** is used some 150 times. It has been much discussed. There is **an equivalent Arabic root** meaning 'cover', or 'conceal'. **On the strength of this connection it has been supposed** that the

Hebrew word means 'to cover over sin' and thus pacify the deity, making an atonement (so BDB). **It has been suggested** that the OT ritual symbolized a covering over of sin **until it was dealt with** in fact by the atonement of Christ. There is, however, **very little evidence for this view**. The connection of the Arabic word is **weak** and **the Hebrew root is not used to mean 'cover.'** The Hebrew verb is never used in the simple or Qal stem, but only in the derived intensive stems. These intensive stems often indicate not emphasis, but merely that the verb is derived from a noun whose meaning is more basic to the root idea. (TWOT entry #1023.0)

End of quotation.

10) Can you see what has happened with this Hebrew verb "kaphar"?

First of all, this Hebrew root is **not** used to mean "cover"! Hebrew scholars know this. So the scholars found a similar root word **in the Arabic language**, which happens to mean "cover". The scholars then **reasoned** that therefore the Hebrew word must also mean "cover". That is in spite of having no evidence at all to support their reasoning of inferring a meaning from the Arabic language to the Hebrew language. And they can look at over 150 places where the Hebrew root of "kaphar" is used ... and not one of them means "to cover".

11) Notice also that their line of reasoning was based on **the covering being temporary!** They believed it was temporary **until Jesus Christ gave His life** for our sins. Let's understand that it was **because** they looked upon what happens on the Day of Atonement as **temporary**, that **therefore** they wanted the meaning "**cover**". They understood that sins which are only "covered" still need to be dealt with afterwards.

I trust that you don't believe that the Day of Atonement pictures something that only had a temporary meaning! If you at all believe that what happens on the Day of Atonement has a permanent effect, then our Hebrew words cannot possibly have the meaning "cover".

12) Anyway, what happened next is this: scholars of this world had decided that "kaphar" should also mean "to cover" because they had a temporary covering in mind. That temporary meaning is why they used the English word "cover". Then along came Church of God ministers and saw that the world's scholars tell us that "kaphar" means "to cover". So the Church of God ministers accepted this English translation "to cover", but attached **a completely different meaning** to the English word "to cover". Church of God ministers simply **assumed** that "to cover" refers to **something permanent**. This reasoning is illogical.

13) By definition something that is "covered" cannot be permanent. That's what Jesus Christ said.

Fear them not therefore: for **there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed**; and hid, that shall not be known. (Matthew 10:26)

Christ's statement means that **if** Atonement is "The Day of Covering", **then** the Day of Atonement must represent something that only has a temporary meaning and application. But to say that Atonement pictures something that is temporary is patently wrong.

14) **Here is TWOT entry #1024.0.**

1024.0 ... (*kapar*) II, cover over with pitch. **This denominative verb is used only in Ge 6:14** in the waterproofing of the ark. The cognate word is used in the Babylonian flood story.

Parent Noun

(1024a) ... (**koper**) II, **pitch**. A noun, from which the above verb was doubtless derived. Pitch, bitumen, asphalt was used in early antiquity as an adhesive to hold inlays into statues. It was a logical material for caulking the ark as specified both in the Bible and the Babylonian flood story. R.L.H. (TWOT entry #1024.0)

End of quotation.

15) As we can see, TWOT also recognized that "kaphar" in Genesis 6:14 does not at all fit in with the other meanings of "kaphar". The sets of meanings are vastly different. They have nothing in common, as far as meanings are concerned. So TWOT states that the verb "kaphar" in Genesis 6:14 is not used anywhere else in the OT. [Comment: In this regard see my closing comment at the end of this article.]

Right, so much for the technicalities in the Hebrew language. Let's move on.

Okay, so if we are saying that the Day of Atonement is not about covering sins, then what about the Scriptures that tell us that our sins are covered? Are they all mistranslations?

No, they are not mistranslations at all. Sins can be "covered" and sins can be "sent away". But those two are not the same thing. Here is the rest of the story.

THE PROCESS OF REMOVING SINS

All human beings have sinned (obviously excluding Jesus Christ). We all need to have our sins removed. But the total removal of our sins involves two distinct steps.

STEP 1 Our sins are "covered", meaning they are hidden from view.

STEP 2 Our sins are "carried away", meaning they are permanently eliminated.

So there is indeed a temporary "covering" of our sins. But that temporary covering has nothing at all to do with the Day of Atonement.

The covering of our sins (step 1) happens when we repent and have our sins forgiven by God. At that point our sins are not removed; they are only transferred to Jesus Christ, who willingly takes them upon Himself. In that way they are then covered over. So Jesus Christ is then carrying our sins.

However, if we go back on our repentance, and we go back into the world in our way of life, then Jesus Christ immediately transfers our sins back to our account. And then we are once again fully accountable for all the sins which had been forgiven by God.

So covering our sins is something that **can be reversed**. Covering our sins only lasts as long as we stay faithful to God. This process is clear from a parable Jesus Christ told. It is recorded in Matthew 18.

"A certain king" (i.e. God) was taking account of His servants (Matthew 18:23). Then a certain servant was brought to God.

And when He had begun to reckon, one was brought unto Him, which **owed Him ten thousand talents**. (Matthew 18:24)

We know this parable. The man couldn't pay and asked for mercy. So here is God's response.

Then **the Lord** of that servant was moved with compassion, and **loosed him, and forgave him the debt.** (Matthew 18:27)

This is picturing the man having repented and **God** as a result **having forgiven him all his sins.** At this point all of this man's sins are **covered.** They have been removed from view. Jesus Christ has taken that man's sins upon Himself. And the man has been fully absolved from having to give account for any of those sins.

What happens next makes clear that, while the man's sins have been forgiven and covered, they have **not yet** "been taken away". They are still right there, but under cover.

In this parable this man then conducted himself in a cruel and harsh way towards a fellow-Christian. The man is showing that he is no longer repentant. The man is shown as having left the faith.

So the King calls this man back.

Then his lord, after that He had called him, said unto him, O you wicked servant, **I forgave you all that debt,** because you desired Me: (Matthew 18:32)

Again, God makes clear that the man's sins had all been forgiven before he left the faith. In verse 33 God strongly reprimands this man. And then God held the man accountable for all the sins that God had forgiven earlier on.

And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, **till he should pay all that was due unto Him.** (Matthew 18:34)

"All that was due to the Lord" is a reference to **all the things that the Lord had previously forgiven.** But how can that be? How can things that have been forgiven suddenly be reversed?

Our sins which have been forgiven can indeed be held against us again when we sin, because those forgiven sins had only been covered, but not yet taken away out of existence. Our sins have been taken away from us as individual persons; but our forgiven sins are still "hanging around" in Jesus Christ's account. And God will return them into our own accounts if we should stop obeying God.

Before God **all forgiveness is always conditional!** It is always conditional on continued obedience by the person whose sins have been forgiven. In the resurrection God's forgiveness will become unconditional and permanent, because then it will be impossible for us to sin.

So **Step 1** in the forgiveness process is when our sins are covered, but they still exist in Jesus Christ's account. This forgiveness happens at repentance.

Step 2 is pictured by the Day of Atonement. At that point all our sins are first "uncovered", and then they are placed on the head of Satan. This step only happens after Satan has been set free for a short time, and Satan is then bound again, for all future eternity, and he is banished into "the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jude 1:13). When Satan goes into "the blackness of darkness", then he takes **all human sins that had been forgiven by God** with him into that blackness of darkness.

The only human sins that will not have been forgiven by God will be those sins that were committed by people who also committed the unpardonable sin. Those sins stay with the people who will be thrown into the lake of fire. And it is in the lake of fire where those unforgiven sins will be permanently

destroyed.

The Atonement Day ceremony shows us that all human sins that have been forgiven by God will only be permanently removed from Jesus Christ's account **after the millennium has ended**. Until then all forgiven human sins will reside in Jesus Christ's account.

The Day of Atonement ceremony shows that the action of Satan carrying away all forgiven sins will happen at the very last occasion when any spirit being will ever see Satan! After all the sins have been transferred to Satan's head, Satan and his demons will never be seen again by any member of the God Family or by any of the holy angels of God. And Satan will have all those sins on his head for ever.

Now let's look at Genesis 6:14, the one place where "kaphar" is translated as pitch.

GENESIS 6:14

Make you an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall you make in the ark, **and shall pitch it within and without with pitch**. (Genesis 6:14)

The expression of interest here is "pitch it with pitch". The verb translated as "to pitch it" is "**kaphar**", and the noun translated as "pitch" is "**kopher**". [In the TWOT quotations above those words are "kaphar II" in #1024, and "koper" in #1024(a).]

Regarding the verb "kaphar", we have seen that it does not mean "to cover". What it does mean is: to reconcile, to purge, to atone. In other words, when we are purged of our sins, that enables us to then be reconciled to God. So reconciliation with God is the result of us first being purged or purified.

The word "atonement" refers to that same process. To be reconciled with God means that we are "made at one" with God. So I believe that the words "**atone**" and "**atonement**" **are suitable translations** for the biblical Hebrew words "kaphar" and "kippur". The words "to cover" and "covering", on the other hand, are not at all suitable translations for these Hebrew words. They are plain mistranslations.

Regarding the noun "kopher", this word is used 17 times in the OT. And Genesis 6:14 is the only place where it is translated as "pitch". In the following verses I have highlighted in bold text the English words with which "kopher" has been translated.

If there be laid on him **a sum of money**, then he shall give for the ransom (Hebrew "redemption", not "kopher") of his life whatsoever is laid upon him. (Exodus 21:30)

When you take the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man **a ransom** for his soul unto the LORD, when you number them; that there be no plague among them, when *you* number them. (Exodus 30:12)

Moreover you shall take no **satisfaction** for the life of a murderer, which *is* guilty of death: but he shall be surely put to death. And ye shall take no **satisfaction** for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he should come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the priest. (Numbers 35:31-32)

Behold, here I *am*: witness against me before the LORD, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* **bribe** to blind my eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. (1 Samuel 12:3)

Then He is gracious unto him, and says, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found **a ransom**. (Job 33:24)

Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest He take you away with *His* stroke: then **a great ransom** cannot deliver you. (Job 36:18)

None *of them* can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God **a ransom** for him: (Psalm 49:7)

The ransom of a man's life are his riches: but the poor hears not rebuke. (Proverbs 13:8)

The wicked *shall be* **a ransom** for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright. (Proverbs 21:18)

The ten verses above are more than half of all the places where this Hebrew noun "kopher" is used. What is the overall flavor of this Hebrew word? In Numbers 35:31-32 instead of "**satisfaction**" it could equally correctly be translated as "**ransom**", as it is in translations like the ASV, RSV, NIV, etc.

The main way this Hebrew noun is used is to refer to **some kind of payment as a type of penalty**. It could be a ransom or a bribe or a required payment. But none of these verses have anything in them that would even remotely suggest a meaning like "pitch".

Right, so the meanings for the verb "kaphar" are "**reconcile**", "**atone**", and "**purge**"; and the meanings for the noun "kopher" are "**ransom and payment**".

Question: So why did the translators translate these words in Genesis 6:14 as "you shall pitch it with pitch"?

Answer: Because **nothing else made sense to them** in that particular context. I mean, what else could you possibly do inside and outside some boat or barge?

Before we look at the expression "within and without" in Genesis 6:14, let's first establish **what we now already know for certain**.

1) The translation of the first part of this verse is quite acceptable. It reads:

"Make you an ark of gopher wood, rooms shall you make in the ark."

2) The mistranslated second part reads:

"... and **shall pitch** it within and without **with pitch**."

3) Corrected this part reads:

"... and **you shall purge/reconcile** **with a ransom**."

4) So what still needs to be translated correctly is the part in the middle, which is translated as "**it within and without**". After that we can put the whole picture for this verse together.

In the mistranslated text **the focus is the ark**. And the mistranslated statement "you shall pitch it with pitch" is clearly focused on the ark. And with that focus on the ark the translators didn't really have many options.

However ...

When we understand that the correct focus of this statement is that "**you shall purge with a ransom**", then the ark cannot be the focus. There is no reason for **purging "the ark"**. And there is no possible reason for paying **a ransom for "the ark"**. That is precisely why the translators didn't translate this correctly. They were thinking about the ark.

The key for us is:

Once we clearly understand that **this is a statement about purging or reconciling "something" with a ransom**, then that "something" cannot possibly be the ark!

It must be **something other than the ark**, which needs to be purged with a ransom. And "atoning, purging or reconciling" always involves a life or lives! It is **a life** for which a ransom is paid.

An inanimate object like the ark doesn't need to be purged or reconciled. And it doesn't require a ransom to be spared from destruction.

God had just said in the previous verses that He would destroy all human lives and all animal lives. That is what "the end of all flesh is come before Me" refers to ... all physical lives being destroyed.

That is then followed by a statement about "a ransom" having to be brought, in order to be spared from destruction. There are only two options for such a ransom.

1) It could be a ransom for **the eight human beings** who were spared on the ark.

2) It could be a ransom for **all the animals** that were spared on the ark.

Those two groups are the only possibilities for needing to pay a ransom. There are no other possibilities, because no other land-based physical lives would be spared from destruction.

So once we understand that God is speaking about reconciling (or purging) by means of a ransom, then either one or both of these groups are **the only option** for the focus of this statement.

And that brings us to the words "... it within and without".

These words can only refer to either the eight human beings on the ark, or to all the animals on the ark, or it can refer to both these groups together.

Nothing else could possibly qualify for being purged with a ransom. There are no other possible applications for a ransom in that context!

Now **why** did both these groups need to be "purged with a ransom"?

Both groups had been a part of a sick, depraved, perverse and utterly violent world, which world God was preparing to destroy. In that sense both these groups were "contaminated" by exposure to that world. The purging or reconciling by means of a ransom was to represent that contamination being removed from those individuals.

This reference to purging by means of a ransom was to explain **how it was possible for those in the ark to be spared**. A ransom was paid for them.

Now let's look at our expression.

The Hebrew word translated as "**within**" is "**bayith**". This Hebrew noun is used 2055 times in the OT, and it is translated as "house" or as "home" or as "household" exactly 1960 times. This word really means "house", and by extension "household".

In this verse the word "bayith" has the prefix "mi" attached to it; i.e. it reads "**mi-bayith**" in the text. In your Hebrew dictionary you will find this prefix listed as the word "min".

Thinking about this prefix "min" for a while:

This Hebrew prefix is used to convey many different things. It always depends on the context in which this prefix is used. When it is applied in a **spatial context**, then it usually means "out of, away from". When it is used in a **temporal context**, then it usually means "since, from". It is also used **to designate a logical cause**, in which case it is translated as "because of". It is also used **to designate an originator**, in which case it is sometimes translated as "by" (e.g. "by the king"). There are also a number of other ways in which this prefix is used.

These different applications for the prefix "min" are thoroughly explained in "A CONCISE HEBREW AND ARAMAIC LEXICON OF THE OLD TESTAMENT" by William L Holladay. I have listed a few of those applications above so the reader will understand that the explanation I will provide below is grammatically completely justified.

Here is the point I want to make:

The translators were thinking of a **spatial context** for this verse. They were thinking of the space of the ark. And in a spatial context they could correctly have translated "mi-bayith" as "**out from the house**" or as "**away from the house**". But it is wrong to translate "mi-bayith" as "within", because the prefix "mi" gives the word for "house" the force of "going out from". So "**within**" is a **wrong translation**.

However:

When this prefix is used **to designate a cause**, then it conveys a completely different meaning. In this case it conveys the meaning "because of". So in this case "mi-bayith" should be correctly translated as "because of the house" or as "**because of the household (of Noah)**".

The Hebrew word translated as "**without**" is "**chuwts**". This Hebrew noun is used 164 times in the OT, and it means "outside". Here this word also has the prefix "mi" attached to it. And "mi-chuwts" should be translated as "**because of the outside**".

"The outside" does not refer to "the outside of the ark". No, it is "outside" in relation to the previous word. That is, it is "outside" in relation to "the household of Noah". So the expression "because of the outside" really means "**because of those outside of Noah's household**".

To keep things simple, I will just use the word "purge", with the understanding that "reconcile" and "atone" would be equally correct in the statements below.

So the second part of verse 14 should read:

"... **And you shall purge** (because of) **the household and** (because of) **those outside the household with a ransom.**"

In English the inclusion of the words "because of" makes the whole sentence rather clumsy. We can put this into a more readable form by replacing the words "because of" with the word "therefore". Now we

have the following:

"... And you shall therefore purge the household and those outside (the household) with a ransom."

We might note that in Genesis 6:14 God used the word for "ark" twice and the word for "house/household" once. So God was drawing **a distinction between the ark** (mentioned twice), **and the house or household** (mentioned once). Otherwise God could have used the word for "ark" three times. This distinction between "ark" and "household" is totally lost in our false and incomplete translations into English.

So now let's put together a correct translation for all of Genesis 6:14.

"Make an ark of gopher wood; rooms shall you make in the ark. And you shall therefore purge the household and those outside (the household) with a ransom."

Look again at Exodus 30:12 above, where God instructed every man to pay "a ransom for his soul" so that he would be **protected from the plague** at that time. The same thing applied to Noah!

God was about to destroy all human beings and all animals. And for the eight people in the ark plus all the animals, who were spared, **there had to be a ransom**. The ransom was not for the ark, but for the household of Noah and for all the animals that were spared.

Keep in mind that we are dealing with **three significant mistranslations** in this one verse. This verse should not include the verb "pitch it", and it should not include the noun "pitch", and it also grossly mistranslated the Hebrew "mi-bayith" as "within". There is no word in this verse that means "within". The result of correcting those mistranslations gives us a completely different meaning.

Now here is a problem the translators did not consider:

You do not "pitch" boats and barges "within and without"! That idea is plain stupid!

Applying pitch to something (irrespective of whether that pitch is tar or bitumen or asphalt or some kind of resin) makes that surface sticky! Pitch is not a solid mass; it is actually a very thick sticky liquid which flows ever so slowly (taking years in some cases to move a very small distance). So it might well appear solid to us.

But boat builders do not "pitch" their boats on the inside! Boatbuilders use pitch as a form of calk **on the outside seams** of their wooden boats.

If the ark had indeed been "pitched within", **it would have made life extremely uncomfortable** for all the animals, and also for Noah and his family. It would be stupid to pitch the floors and the walls of your inside living quarters, especially without the aid of modern chemically-designed hardeners to add to the pitch.

Pitch was applied exclusively to the outside seams of ships and vessels. There is no place for pitch on the inside of a vessel. And the Hebrew text of this verse does not say anything at all about "within".

Also, without making a big deal about this, if there really were going to be any instructions to apply pitch to the ark, then those instructions really should have come after verse 15, **not before verse 15**. Here is why. Verse 14 is only a general introductory statement. The building instructions start with verse 15, which says: "this is the fashion which you shall make it of ...". You first have to have the building

instructions, with dimensions, etc., before you need to know anything about "pitching" or "calking". **The calking instructions are the last thing you focus on in building a boat**, not the opening statement.

Furthermore, there are so many significant details for building the ark, that are not presented in Genesis, that any statements about calking are totally insignificant. If Noah could build the ark from the basic instructions he was given, then he didn't need to be told anything about calking. Building the ark from the basic instructions that are given required Noah to already have a considerable degree of understanding about boat-building. And calking the outside seams **at the end of that project** would have been obvious to Noah.

SO WHAT DO WE HAVE IN GENESIS 6:14?

In Genesis 6:13 God had just said to Noah "I will destroy all people and all animals on earth". The next statement then is: I want you to build an ark with living quarters in it for your family. **That's not the place to talk about calking a big barge**, for which barge God had not yet mentioned any dimensions.

Furthermore, the "end of all flesh" would have included Noah and his family, since they were also flesh. So in order to avoid Noah having to also die in the flood, Noah and his family had to be purged by paying a ransom of some kind.

All the animals on earth were also destined to die. But the animals on the ark would be saved alive. Now the animals were not a part of Noah's household, or Noah's family. The animals were definitely "on the outside" of Noah's family.

Everything on this planet earth was about to be destroyed by God, with the exception of those in the ark. In the ark were eight human beings, and in the ark were also pairs of all animals. Two categories of living beings were spared, and a ransom for each category spared was required by God. Everything else was destroyed in the flood. That's what Genesis 6:14 is all about.

Now there was no way that unconverted translators were ever going to understand this correct meaning. **They had no idea what this verse is actually speaking about.** All they did is try to figure out: what can this possibly mean? And to a carnal mind references to boat-building instructions were the only possibility. And that is why **they invented new meanings** for the Hebrew words used in the second half of this verse. And they had to resort to comparisons to the Arabic language to justify those supposed new meanings in the Hebrew language. Talk about a big stretch!

Now understand one other thing:

If it wasn't for the wrong meanings that translators assigned to the Hebrew words "kaphar" and "kopher", then nobody would ever have suggested that these words somehow also supposedly mean "to cover" and "to cover with pitch" and "pitch". These meanings are all incorrectly attached to these Hebrew words only because these words appear in Genesis 6:14 in the context with the ark, and for no other reason. Without the glaring mistranslations in this specific verse the correct meanings would have been obvious from all the other places where these words are used.

But don't expect any Hebrew scholars to agree with the explanation I have given you here, because that isn't going to happen.

IN SUMMARY

- 1) Sins that are "**covered**" have been taken on by Jesus Christ.
- 2) Sins that are "**driven away**" will be heaped on the head of Satan. And they will always stay on his head for future eternity in "the blackness of darkness".
- 3) The Day of Atonement ceremony has nothing whatsoever to do with people coming to repentance. This means that this ceremony has nothing to do with any sins being "covered".
- 4) The Day of Atonement ceremony is all about sins being forcefully driven away. It has to do with the total expulsion of sins. And it is that forceful expulsion of all sins that makes it possible for us to be made "at one" with God.
- 5) It is perfectly correct to refer to this day as "the Holy Day of Atonement".
- 6) And it should never be called "the Day of Covering".
- 7) So to make this plain: By itself the statement that Jesus Christ's sacrifice covers our sins is correct. **What is wrong is to apply that statement to the Day of Atonement.** The Day of Atonement deals with the expulsion of sins.

And for the record: When the mistranslation of "kaphar" in Genesis 6:14 is corrected, then there is in fact only one word "kaphar". And then the second entry for "kaphar" in TWOT is eliminated. That second entry for "kaphar" in TWOT is nothing more than a recognition that the word "kaphar", as used in 101 other OT places, cannot possibly have any meaning like "pitch" or "cover". It was because of that recognition that TWOT created a second entry for the word "kaphar". Correcting the meaning in Genesis 6:14 eliminates the need for this second entry.

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