

John 65 – Choice: Yahweh or Azazel

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John 18:39-19:15

Prologue

- John's states, when offered the choice by Pilate the crowd chose Barabbas over Jesus
 - Other Gospels offer crucial information clarifying the significance of the decision of the crowd and elders
 - Goats of Yahweh and Azazel ceremony mirror this event
 - It may also mirror the Jews sent into all the nations until called by God beginning the Great Tribulation

Ceremony of the Goats (Le 16:7-22)

- During the celebration of Yom Kippur (Day of Covering - Atonement) God inserts this curious ritual of the Two Goats chosen by lots
 - Yahweh's Goat - Sacrificed for sin
 - Azazel's Goat - Sent out into the Wilderness
 - It is not seen again in Scripture nor is the word Azazel
 - Was practiced during the Second Temple period but they threw the goat off a cliff outside of Jerusalem

Not sure where the term scapegoat came from as it is not in the Hebrew
Thus, I will not be using that term during our lesson

No Consensus on Azazel

- Azazel is not used in the Bible nor in other Hebrew writings other than to debate the meaning of the word making accurate translation difficult
 - Hebrew had no capitalization; thus, capitalization added by other language translators
 - Most assigned meanings more flights of fantasy from a jinn (mischievous desert sprite) to an evil angel

Ockham's Razor: KISS

- Keep It Simple Sir is probably the best approach
 - The Septuagint translates the word as *carried away* (ἀποπρομαρτίῃ) rather than azazel - Descriptive
 - Some Rabbinic sources defined the word as "azaz" [rugged] and "el" [strong] - Desolation or wilderness
- Thus, this goat is simply named the *sent away into the desolate wilderness* [azazel] goat {KISS} (Le 16:22)

Who Do the Goats Represent?

- Yahweh's Goat was another Yom Kippur sin sacrifice
 - Yahweh's goat - Christ sacrificed for our sins on the stauros [tree] (Ro 5:6-9)
 - azazel's Goat - Sent into the desolation with a scarlet cord tied to its horns represented Jews sent into the nations bearing their iniquity until saved and called by God beginning the Great Tribulation; example: Paul (1a 11:10-12; 1Co 15:1-11; Re 12:17)

Why Were the Jews Scattered?

- The answer to this question lies in our present text
 - Jews were scattered because they did not know the time of their visitation (Lk 20:41-44)
 - Rather than submit to Christ they envied Him (Mt 23:15-18)
 - The crowd rejected Jesus, freeing Barabbas (J= 18-40)
 - Their condemnation doomed them as a nation (Lk 11:46-52; Ro 11:14, 25-32)

Who Was Barabbas?

- Barabbas is probably not a name but a descriptive
 - Bar - Son of
 - Abbas - Father or daddy (informal)
 - This man was a rebellious and violent murderer (Mt 15:67, Lk 23:18-19)
- This man was the son of his father; who was his father?

There Can Only Be One {Father}

- Christ told the Sadducees and Pharisees that they were of their father (J= 8:44)
 - Lucifer: Murderer and liar from the moment he sinned (Is 28:15-18)
 - Barabbas, a murderer, was of his father, Lucifer (Devil)
- The crowd chose to release a man like themselves who had already glorified their forefathers who murdered the prophets (Lk 11:46-52)

Nation Had a Clear Choice (Mt. 27:20)

- Pilate declared Jesus innocent of any charges (Mt. 15:6-14)
 - When Pilate found Jesus innocent the Sanhedrin, led by the high priests, assembled a crowd {tens of thousands in Jerusalem to celebrate Passover; a riot would have easily overwhelmed any Roman garrison} (Mt. 27:23-24)
 - Tenor of the crowd was easily realized by choosing an active anti-Roman Jew, Barabbas {freedom fighter}, over an innocent man

Comparison of the Two Goats

Son of His Father – God

- Did not allow Peter to use violence (Mt. 26:52)
- Kingdom not of this world (Jn. 18:36)
- Condemned, the sin goat sacrifice for eternal life to believers (1Pe. 2:24)

Bar Abbas – Lucifer

- Relied on violence to obtain his goal
- Fought for Jewish freedom – Rebellion (1Sa. 15:23)
- Condemned to *desolation of eternal judgment* except those called by the Father

Scourged and Mocked

- Jesus scourged by Pilate to appease the crowd
 - Pilate punishes a man he already declared innocent to prevent an execution – Peirasmos {Testing} by Lucifer
 - Probably reviewed by regional governor
 - Pilate could not afford additional censuring
- Roman soldiers mocked Jesus like the Temple guards
 - Jesus, innocent, beaten three times and scourged

Pilate Presents Scourged Christ

- Pilate presents the barely alive thorn-crowned Jesus to the crowd as, “The Man” (The innocent man)
 - Again, the elders and crowd scream for His death
 - Pilate tells them they can take Jesus and kill Him
- The elders then add a new charge: Son of God
 - Pilate, shaken, again questions Jesus in private
 - Emphasizes he has the power to execute Him; speak!
Not sure why they added this new charge which nearly derailed their plans
Except, Pilate had not yet spoken officially; from the Chair
Ex Cathedra

Christ Speaks to Pilate

- Christ responds to Pilate that he has no power except as allowed by God (Nebuchadnezzar's Iron Legs Image)
 - Then Jesus makes a curious statement: The one who delivered me to you has the greater sin
 - Though frequently believed to be Judas; Judas Ish Kerioth did not turn Jesus over to Pilate
 - High Priest started this inquiry; choosing Jesus to die for nation (sin goat) and Barabbas to go free (azazel's goat)
(Jo 11:50-51)

Friend of Caesar – Title

- When Pilate again declares Jesus innocent to the crowd they retort that Pilate is no friend of Caesar
 - Friend of Caesar an official title of patronage
 - However, Pilate had lost his patron, Sejanus
 - He was not considered a friend by suspicious Tiberius
 - This was an indirect threat against his own life
Sejanus was setting himself to be Emperor, Tiberius had the Senate execute him
Any charge against Pilate would be addressed by Tiberius with predictable outcome
Eventually Pilate would be before Caligula, succeeded Tiberius, and forced to commit suicide

Pilate Speaks Ex Cathedra

- Jews support their veiled threat with a new charge: Jesus is king; if Pilate releases a man charged as a traitor against Caesar, he could be charged; and executed
 - Faced with either a riot he can not control and be held accountable, if not killed, or charged himself as a traitor to labile, vengeful Tiberius; Pilate makes a choice
 - Barabbas probably did not seek to be leader; however, Pilates flawed logic – Releasing an insurrectionist

Pilate Sanctions the Execution

- Pilate seeks to protect himself from rioting Jews and charges of Roman disloyalty
 - Chair (cathedra) set out on the Stone Pavement outside the Praetorium in full view of the everyone
 - He washes his hands declaring that they demanded the execution, not Rome: They agree to their blood guilt
(Jn 9:6; Mt 27:24,26)
 - Pilate offers one last opportunity to avoid Jesus' murder

“Behold Your King”

- Pilate officially presents Christ: “Behold Your King!”
 - Crowd in a near riot screams for Jesus' execution
- Pilate mockingly asks, “Shall I execute your king?”
 - Chief priests answer, “We have no king but Caesar.”
 - Through their elders, the nation acknowledges its submission to Rome; and thus, to Lucifer – False Jews
 - Rejection of God as King as their forefathers (Isa 8:7)

Yahweh's Goat Led to Slaughter

- All four Gospels state that He was led away just as Yahweh's goat was led to the altar of sacrifice for sin
 - The *son of Lucifer* was also set free bearing the iniquity of the nation into utter desolation of sin
 - There is no record of repentance from:
 - Annas When the Priesthood and elders admitted that His blood was on them They accepted blood guiltiness; responsibility for His death
 - Caiaphas By demanding the release of Barabbas they identified his sin as theirs
 - Barabbas In A.D. 70 Titus destroyed the Temple ending Judah as an entity

Fall Festivals Based on Jesus' Death

- Rosh HaShanah (Trumpets) – Christ's call to dispersed Jews and calling out the Church (Rapture)
- Yom Kippur (Day of Covering) – Great Tribulation separating *True* from *False* Jews and Gentiles
- Sukkoth (Feast of Tabernacles) – Return of Christ for His Millennial Kingdom: Final Dispensation
 - Sukkoth the only celebration during the Millennial Kingdom
 - All peoples required to come to Jerusalem in remembrance of Christ's birthday
 - As the Millennial Kingdom progresses, and sinners increase, many will refuse to come

Christ's Death a Collaboration

- It was not just the Jews but the also the Gentiles who agreed to the death of Messiah
 - All who sinned, and to be redeemed, put Christ on the stauros (tree); thus, all are equally guilty
 - Christ *never* spoke in His own defense: Father's will (Lk 53:7)
- Lucifer and his agents acted according to their sin nature: active agents in their own eternal destruction (1Co 2:14)