

**Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us**  
"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,  
and shew my people their transgression,  
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

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## **Unclassified Topics**

### **Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully**

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## **Azazel**

There are several interpretations concerning the scapegoat **Azazel** mentioned in (Leviticus 16). In my view, the matter is **not critical**; by which I mean that a **believer's misunderstanding is not regarded as sin. A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** does not publish material on the scapegoat: but, since the question is often asked, here are a few quotations taken from various sources concerning **Azazel**.

### **Westminster Dictionary of the Bible:**

"**Azazel** = removal, in the sense of entire removal. The word occurs in one passage only (Leviticus 16: 8, 10, 26. AV) The data for determining its meaning are meagre and insufficient. Numerous interpretations have been proposed, but they are **conjectures**, more or less satisfactory... One of 3 interpretations is satisfactory:

1. To regard the word as the name of the **spirit** supposed to have his abode in the wilderness, remote from human habitation, to whom the goat laden with the sins of the people was sent. **In Azazel may be the trace of illicit worship of demons or satyrs.** If this be the case the Pentateuch recognizes such a demon only as an **evil spirit** to whom belong the sins of the people.
2. To regard the word as an abstraction. "Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; **one for Jehovah, and the other for Azazel** (removal or dismissal) into the wilderness" The idea of the escaped goat is virtually preserved by this interpretation.
3. To regard the word as the epithet of the **Devil, the Apostate One.** Those who are laden with sin belong to the Devil..."

### **Pictorial Biblical Encyclopaedia** page 326 on **Scapegoat**.

"Secondly came the ritual of the two goats. One was sacrificed for the people's sins and its blood sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, thus linking the expiation of the sins of both people and priests. The second goat - apparently derived from a separate stream of ancient beliefs and rites - was offered by the community, destined for **Azazel** (probably, although not certainly, a **demonic spirit**) and set, alive, before Yahweh. The High Priest laid his hands upon the head of this scapegoat whereupon Yahweh transferred to it all the sins - whether deliberate or unintentional - of the people. Then, bearing all the sins of the people, it was taken into the wilderness and driven out. There is a tradition that it was taken to the top of a precipice - at one time to **Beth-Hadudun**, modern **Khirbet Khareidon**, overlooking the Kidron Valley, some six kilometres from Jerusalem - and there hurled down from a great height."

**Bullinger** comments in the **Companion Bible** concerning the two words '**with him**' in (Leviticus 16: 10) The scapegoat was not used to make atonement, but atonement was made for it. Hence he was to be "**let go**" free.

**Hastings Dictionary of the Bible**, page 207 article **Azazel**:

The name of the spirit (Leviticus 16: 8, 10, 26) supposed to have its abode in the wilderness, to whom, on the day of Atonement, the goat laden with the sins of the people was sent (v 20-22). Azazel is not mentioned elsewhere in the OT; but the name occurs in the Book of Enoch (2nd cent. B.C.) as that of the **leader of the evil angels** who (Genesis 6: 2-4) formed unions with the daughters of men, and (as the legend is developed in the Book of Enoch) taught them various arts, and whose off-spring, the giants, filled the earth with unrighteousness and blood. On account of the wickedness wrought by Azazel upon earth, the four archangels, Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael (9: 1) are represented as impeaching him before the Almighty, who there upon (ch.10) bids Raphael bind him hand and foot, and secure him, under rough and jagged rocks, at a place in the desert called Dudael, until on the great day of judgment he is cast into the fire...

In the **Hastings Dictionary of the Bible** we also find various shades of meaning. We quote:

**Willis:** Azazel, the name of a personal being, in opposition to Jehovah, the personal name of God.

**Schulz:** Some powerful being to whom the animal is assigned, and to whom it is sent with the now forgiven guilt of the reconciled people...

**This being must be conceived of as strange and unholy...**

An Aramaic name for an **unclean and ungodlike power**, which has its abode in the wilderness, in the accursed land outside the sacred bounds of the camp.'

**Cambridge Companion of the Bible:**

**Watson:** Azazel, the completely separate one, the **evil spirit** regarded as dwelling in the desert.

As you can see there are various shades of meaning; though **most agree that Azazel is an evil being who the Almighty banished to the wilderness**. Beyond this I will not attempt an explanation, in case I am wrong and the other material **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** publishes - which is positive truth - is rejected.

My advice is teach or preach about things of which you are absolutely certain: **truths which are supported by numerous Bible quotations**. In this way you will direct your hearers to faith and obedience. Entering areas of speculation is dangerous unless one can support every assumption with several Bible texts. You will notice that **A Voice In The Wilderness - Canada** is extremely cautious for fear of being wrong and leading unsuspecting souls into error. I endeavour to publish only what I am certain of. **I am not certain who Azazel is**. After all, there is only one Bible passage which mentions the scapegoat.

**AMEN!**

**In the Son's Name — For the Father's glory.**

*Elder: Max W. Mader*

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