

Who Is The “Fit Man?”

There are two verses of Scripture I'd like to focus on this morning, and they're found in **Leviticus 16:21, 22**, and we'll go there in a minute, but first I'd like to give you a little background. **Leviticus 16** is the chapter that deals with the Day of Atonement with the sanctuary service during Old Testament times. But we should understand how important this is to us during New Testament times as well, because the Old Testament sanctuary was patterned after the one where? In heaven. In other words, there's a direct correlation to the things that took place in the ancient sanctuary that are taking place in reality in the heavenly sanctuary right this very minute.

In **Hebrews 8 and 9** the apostle Paul informs us that the sanctuary Israel worshiped at, with all their animal sacrifices and ceremonies, pointed to Jesus and the sacrifice He made on the cross of Calvary and His work as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. And so, it's important for us to know that after Jesus was crucified, all Old Testament services, except for the one we're talking about today, have met their fulfillment and are no longer to be observed, because to do so is to reject the sacrifice of Christ.

And by the way, on the Day of Atonement, whether it's the antitypical service that's in progress in heaven right now, or the typical service that took place during Old Testament times, no other feasts were to be kept simultaneously. And since we are living today while atonement is being made for us in heaven by Jesus our High Priest, we can dismiss the idea that we are still to keep the feast days as some are promoting today, because to do so is to reject the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross as a fulfillment of these things. Also, all the feast days required animal sacrifice, but that aspect is strangely missing from those who advocate the keeping of the feast days, and even among the Jews.

Now, it's good to understand the feast days as to how they relate to their counterpart in the heavenly sanctuary, but it's not good to keep them as if they have not met their fulfillment, because again, that's to turn down the offer of salvation through Christ, and I hope that's clear.

Now, we could spend a lot of time talking about the sanctuary, because the majority of the Old Testament deals with it, but I just want to focus on The Day of Atonement this morning hoping you already have a basic understanding of the sanctuary as a whole.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered what? The most holy place for the cleansing of the sanctuary; that's the only day he was allowed to go into the second apartment behind the veil. During this service two goats were brought to the door of the tabernacle and lots were cast upon them, “one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the

scapegoat.” The goat upon which the first lot fell was killed as a sin offering for the people. And the other goat, which is the scapegoat, had another fate. Notice what it says in **Leviticus 16:21, 22**, “And Aaron (**the high priest**) shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat (**which is the scapegoat, or the one that was not killed**), 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 (**the scapegoat**), and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat (**where?**) in the wilderness,” or “a land not inhabited” by people. That’s an important point we’ll be coming back to.

And here’s another important point, the reason the scapegoat was to be sent away by the hand of “a fit man,” was because the people didn’t regard themselves as being free from the burden of their sins until that was accomplished, and if the scapegoat was somehow able to get away from the “fit man” and enter back into the congregation, those sins would come back upon their own heads. So I think we can say that the “fit man” had a very important role to play on the Day of Atonement.

I’m not sure this is helpful, but the word “fit” in Hebrew here means “timely” or “fit,” and this is the only time this word is used in the Bible. So we could say that this “fit man” comes at the right time or right on time, and that he’s prepared to move when the time comes, or that he’s a “fit man” in readiness. This understanding alone doesn’t really tell us who the “fit man” is, but it does tell us that he is ready and able to get the job done and to make sure the scapegoat doesn’t get away from him so that the sins of the people don’t come back upon their own heads.

Notice what it says in ***Spaulding and Megan, page 2***, a bit long, but well worth reading to make sure we get this right. Ellen writes, “I saw that Jesus’ work in the sanctuary will soon be finished. And after His work there is finished, He will come to the door of the first apartment, and confess the sins of Israel (**that would be spiritual Israel**) upon the head of the Scape Goat. Then He will put on the garments of vengeance. Then the plagues will come upon the wicked, and they do not come till Jesus puts on that garment, and takes His place upon the great white cloud. Then while the plagues are falling, the Scape Goat is being led away. He makes a mighty struggle to escape, but he is held fast by the hand that leads him. If he should effect his escape, Israel would lose their lives. (**Sounds salvational, doesn’t it?**) I saw that it would take time to lead away the Scape Goat into the land of forgetfulness after the sins were put on his head.

“The great white cloud I saw was not the holy place, but entirely separate from the holy and most holy place, entirely separate from the sanctuary. Then the angel repeated these words, and said, ‘This is the time spoken of in Isaiah.’ He saw that there was no man, and

wondered that there was no intercessor. **(Isaiah 59:16)** He had no mediator between God and man, and these plagues could be withheld no longer, for Jesus had ceased to plead for Israel.”

So, there are several things we can glean from this quote: **Number 1**, in the sequence of events the high priest comes out of the Holy and Most Holy places and confesses the sins of Israel upon the head of the Scape Goat. **Number 2**, then He puts on the garments of vengeance. **Number 3**, then the plagues will come upon the wicked, and they do not come till Jesus puts on that garment. **Number 4**, “Then while the plagues are falling, the Scape Goat is being led away.” **Number 5**, “The great white cloud **(was)** entirely separate from the sanctuary.” And **number 6**, the seven last plagues are going to take a little while before the Lord comes, perhaps longer than expected. Every one of these 6 steps taken in order will become extremely important later on as we identify who the “fit man” is, so keep these things in mind.

Now, when the children of Israel brought their sin offerings to the sanctuary all through the year, these offerings represented a substitute that was accepted in the sinner’s behalf, but the blood of the victim had not yet made full atonement for their sins, why? Because that shed blood only provided a means by which the sin was transferred from the sinner to the sanctuary, and the Day of Atonement was all about cleansing the sanctuary of all those sins that had accumulated all through the year. And so, the idea that the atonement was completed on the cross is not correct according to what happened on the Day of Atonement, because not until all the sins were placed upon the head of the scapegoat and successfully led away to perish in the wilderness were the people able to rejoice and know that their sins were forever gone.

Why is this important to know? It’s important because many Christians today believe that when Christ died upon the cross He took all their sins away, with no chance of them coming back upon them, and that they are now eternally secure, or once saved always saved. But that’s not true, because after the cross there’s still a work of atonement to be made in the sinners behalf in the sanctuary above that involves their own cooperation in forming a character like the One who died for them, which the Bible calls sanctification, and that has to happen before our sins are placed upon the scapegoat or we will be lost. And like we already read, the scapegoat has not yet had all the sins of the sanctuary placed upon his head, and until that happens; until the cleansing of the sanctuary in heaven is complete, no one who is still breathing is forever secure. God saves no one against their will, and we can certainly reject Christ just like we accepted Him, and if we do, we will have to pay the penalty for our own sins, which **Romans 6:23** says means eternal death, from which there will be no resurrection.

And so for this reason a proper understanding of the cleansing of the sanctuary becomes extremely important, and an easy way to understand what the word “atonement” means, is to break it up into three parts by saying at-one-ment. The children of Israel during Old Testament times were not at-one-ment, or one with God, until the sins of the people were placed upon the head of the scapegoat and successfully led away into the wilderness to perish. And so, that service, which is an illustration of what’s taking place in heaven right now, becomes equally important to us for the same reason it was important to ancient Israel. Yes, the sacrifice of Jesus was full and complete, but that was only the first phase of the atonement, and the second phase is in progress now, and will be finished only when the scapegoat has our sins placed upon its head. With that being accomplished, then the “fit man” leads him away to perish in the wilderness.

And so, what happened in the earthly sanctuary service all through the year, and especially on the Day of Atonement, was an illustration of the gospel. By the offering of a sacrifice and the shedding of its blood, the sinner confessed his guilt over the animal for breaking the Ten Commandment law and thereby expressed his faith in the One who never broke the law and would one day sacrifice His life to take away that sin and guilt by having it laid upon Himself; that’s what Jesus did 2000 years ago.

And so, people during Old Testament times looked forward by faith to the time when the Messiah would come and sacrifice His life for theirs, and today we look back on it because it has already happened, but salvation wasn’t any different for them than it is for us, and that same idea carries over regarding the Day of Atonement. Just as the sanctuary service all through the year didn’t entirely release the Israelites from the penalty for breaking the law until the Day of Atonement was completed and the sanctuary cleansed, neither are we entirely released from the penalty of a broken law until the heavenly sanctuary is cleansed, and that’s still in the process.

Now, some would say, “that idea takes away our assurance of salvation,” but no, it simply teaches us that we must remain faithful unto death, and isn’t that reasonable? That’s what Jesus said in **Revelation 2:10**, “be thou faithful unto death, **(He said)** and I will give thee a crown of life.” And so, what happens if we are not faithful unto death? Obviously we will not receive that crown of life. And so, absolutely we can have the assurance of salvation today, but that doesn’t mean we can’t lose it, because God has made us with free will. We can choose to revert back to a life of sin any time we want, but why would we want to when we know what the end result will be? For the love of God and for our own salvation, there is much more incentive to be faithful to the end than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

And so, “The blood of Christ, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, was not to cancel the sin; it would stand on record in the sanctuary until the final atonement; so in the type the blood of the sin offering removed the sin from the penitent, but it rested in the sanctuary until the day of atonement.” You can read that in ***Patriarchs and Prophets, page 357.***

Today the Jews call the Day of Atonement Yom Kippur, but since they don’t accept Jesus as the Christ, it’s a meaningless service, because they reject the very One it points to. What they should do is read **Isaiah 53** and **Psalms 22** and take it to heart, because those prophecies are crystal clear that Jesus meets all the requirements of the Messiah they’ve been looking for, but for the most part the rabbis forbid them to be read and discuss it or they apply them to something other than the Messiah, but notice how Isaiah starts out in chapter **53:1**, “Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm **(or the strength)** of the LORD revealed?” Did the Lord reveal Himself to Israel? Oh yes, many times, but they didn’t believe the report, and they still don’t believe it to this day, unfortunately.

There’s a 2300 year time prophecy in **Daniel 8:14** that talks about the cleansing of the sanctuary, and that prophecy reached its fulfillment on October 22, 1844. That’s when judgment began for all who have died confessing to believe in Jesus at some point in their lives, and it will soon pass to the cases of the living, but we don’t have time to go into detail about that right now. If you want more information about this I have a 2 part series you can listen to at BitChute.com, and when you get there type in JacksGWM, and then look for the two sermons titled “What Happened During The Great Awakening In 1844,” and hopefully you will do that if all this seems a little fuzzy to you right now.

On the Day of Atonement, the earthly high priest went into the most holy place where the Ark of the Covenant was, and with the blood of the goat that was killed, or the Lord’s goat, would sprinkle that blood upon the mercy seat. And what was inside the Ark beneath the mercy seat? The Ten Commandment law that God wrote with His own finger; that way the penalty of the broken law was satisfied, or atoned for, because the blood of the One sacrificed represented Jesus, who kept the law perfectly and offers to take our place if we will accept it.

What happened next? The high priest as mediator symbolically then took upon himself all the sins that had accumulated in the sanctuary all through the year and walked out of the holy and most holy places carrying away with him the burden of Israel’s guilt.

And what happened next? He went over to the live goat, or the scapegoat, which represents Satan, and we’ll see that clearly in a few minutes, and laid both hands upon its head, as it says in **Leviticus 16:21**, and confessed 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.” In other words, he transferred those sins from himself and placed them upon the scapegoat and the sanctuary was cleansed. Then the verse goes on to say that the scapegoat bearing those sins was sent away and were regarded as forever separated from the people, and the one responsible for leading the scapegoat away was called a “fit man.” So who is this “fit man?”

For many years I did not understand or know who the “fit man” was. I had studied it and tried to figure it out, but his identity escaped me. And the thing that makes it even more difficult is that the Spirit of Prophecy doesn’t identify who he is, at least not directly. I listened to what others said about it, but there were many different ideas with very little, and in some cases absolutely no Scripture proof about the identity of the “fit man.” Some said they believed it is Jesus Himself. Other said it’s the Holy Spirit or God the Father. Some said it’s the angel Gabriel, and others believe the “fit man” represents the 144,000 spoken of in **Revelation 7** and **14** who vindicate God’s character after human probation closes while there is no mediator to plead their case and while the seven last plagues are falling. And still others said the “fit man,” is one of the 24 elders who were redeemed from the earth as it says in **Revelation 5:8, 9**, meaning it’s someone who once lived upon the earth and died believing in Jesus and were resurrected at some point, probably among those who were raised from the dead after Jesus was raised as it says in **Matthew 27:52, 53**.

Now, the “fit man,” whoever he is, becomes very important, because as I mentioned, if he isn’t successful in leading the scapegoat into the wilderness to be forever separated from the congregation, then all those sins that the high priest placed upon its head would fall back on the head of the sinner, because remember, what happened in the earthly sanctuary was a type, or a copy of the real sanctuary in heaven. And so, whoever the “fit man” represents, he has a pretty important job, doesn’t he? And we should try to understand all we can about this person. Some would say, “why be concerned about it,” and my answer is, because it’s in the Bible, and if it wasn’t important, it wouldn’t be there. If all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable, then this too is inspired information we should try our best to understand, especially as it teaches us that if the scapegoat should effect his escape, we would lose eternal life.

So, through the process of elimination, we want to try to figure out which one of all those mentioned, if any, fits the description of the “fit man.” First of all let’s consider the 144,000 or one of the 24 elders as being the “fit man.” This may be a shock to some of you if this has been your understanding, but as I have searched this out I have concluded that there are serious problems with the idea of a human being, or in this case 144,000 human beings having so important a job as to lead the scapegoat off into the wilderness,

especially if our salvation depends on it. So what are some of the problems with this idea? and it seems to be the popular one, so we need to spend a little time looking at it.

The major problem with this view is that it puts man at the center of saving God's throne and reputation. Now, it's true that God's character will be vindicated by the 144,000, but not because of them, and it won't only be them that do it, as we shall see. The 144,000 are not going to say, "OK Satan, now that we are perfect and sealed for eternity we're going to lead you into a place not inhabited, or into the wilderness where you will perish. We're going to get rid of you once and for all."

And let me tell you, Satan knows that this will be his last chance to escape, and he will struggle harder than ever before to get away and continue creating havoc among God's people. And so, the "fit man" is really going to have to be a fit man in order to do his job successfully, and how can any human being be fit enough to hold on to the most clever and evil being that has ever existed? Figuratively or literally. And keep this in mind, weren't Adam and Eve perfect in every way when they came forth from the Creator's hand? Yes! And yet they were fooled by that old serpent called the devil and Satan, weren't they?

And by the way, if this wilderness is a place not inhabited by human beings, then how can human beings be the fit man? That doesn't make sense to me. And in the sequence of events that will become clear as we go along. Yes, God will use the 144,000 who are from the most degenerate generation that has ever existed; the generation farthest removed from the tree of life, to show unfallen worlds that they are safe to save and that mankind, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can actually keep the commandments of God and stop sinning, and do it during the worse time this plant has ever experienced. But dear friend, only God can vindicate Himself by showing what He has done, and not what they have done. The 144,000 is Satan's last chance to cause them to give up and throw in the towel, but they don't do it, not because they have become sufficient in themselves, but because God has made them what they are, and He gets all the credit. No, the 144,000 or one of the 24 elders aren't going to feel capable to lead away Satan into the wilderness, because that's who the scapegoat is, and again, we'll get to that.

I haven't been able to find even one statement in the Spirit of Prophecy or one verse of Scripture to indicate that it will only be the 144,000 who vindicate God's character, but I have found several that indicate that it's the duty of every Christian to vindicate God's character, whether they are living today or whether they have died in the past. The 144,000 are a special group, yes, and they will be alive when the Lord comes and will not have to die, and they will go through a time of trouble that no other Christians have ever had to go through, and they will be granted special privileges that no one else will have,

but again, I find nothing in inspiration to indicate that they are the only ones who vindicate God's character. If you know of any inspired statements that say that, please let me know.

But here's the truth: if we go into the grave before the Lord comes without having perfected a righteous character by living up to all the light we've been given, and that's what it takes to vindicate God's Character, then we will not be among those raised in the first resurrection. If we go into the grave with unconfessed and unforsaken sins and a defiled character, we will be lost. So we need to get the idea out of our heads that only the 144,000 will vindicate God's character and the rest will be given a free pass somehow, because that's not going to happen. We must all have victory over the temptation to sin if we would be saved, regardless of whether we die before the Lord comes or are privileged to be among the 144,000. And I hope that's clear.

In ***Patriarchs and Prophets, page 68*** it says, "the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe (**but how is He going to do that? Listen**). . . The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it (**the sacrifice of Christ**) would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan."

And so we see here that it's the plan of redemption through Christ's death that will "vindicate the character of God," and we are all involved in this plan, and not just the 144,000. It's "the act of Christ in dying for (**our**) salvation" that will "justify (**or vindicate**) God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan," and not just one small group of 144,000 people, or one of the 24 elders.

Now, as I said a minute ago, I know the prevailing idea seems to be that the "fit man" represents the 144,000, and if that's your understanding I'm sorry, because I cannot find any Biblical or Spirit of Prophecy support for that view, and I'll explain further why that is as we go along. And please, don't turn off your hearing aids because I said the "fit man" is not the 144,000, if that's what you have believed, but stick with me to the end, because the identity of the "fit man" will become abundantly clear.

So why can't the "fit man" be represented by someone who is human? First of all, would you trust your salvation to another human being, even if they have perfected a righteous character? And remember what happened to Adam and Eve in their innocence and perfection. Because make no mistake, this taking away of sin that is to be forever removed

from us with no chance of them ever coming back, is a salvational issue. The “fit man” must be successful in his mission or the church will lose their lives.

And so, the question is, can a human being save us from the penalty of sin? Because when you think about it, that’s what the “fit man” has been tasked to do. And the answer is a resounding no! Because just as the scapegoat was taken away by someone strong enough to make sure that goat didn’t somehow escape and make its way back into the congregation of ancient Israel, so the “fit man” must do the same for spiritual Israel. And we can and should have faith to know that the fit man will be successful, and there’s only one person in all the universe who has been designated to get it done, and that should give you a pretty good hint.

But I want to leave those thoughts right there for a minute and talk about another connecting scripture about the taking away of the scapegoat. We’ll come back to the human aspect in a little while, but for now let’s talk about that angel mentioned in **Revelation 20:1-3**. Let’s read it, and as we do I’ll fill in some of the blanks as we go along. The apostle John says, “And I saw an angel **(and remember, the word “angel” in Greek means “messenger” or “one who brings tidings” and can even mean “a pastor,” or one who shepherds the flock. So it doesn’t necessarily have to be one of the angelic host)** “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he **(that would be the “fit Man,” because this is the same individual spoken of in Leviticus 16:21, and we’ll see that)** And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan **(or we could say the scapegoat)**, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, **(and we’ll also see that this is the same as “a land not inhabited” or “a wilderness”)** and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.”

So, the scapegoat hasn’t perished at this point, has he? Even after 1000 years! Perhaps this is why Sister White said it “will take time to lead away the Scape Goat into the land of forgetfulness after the sins are placed on his head.”

Now let me just stop here for a minute and hit on something else before I forget, because there are many Christians today who believe that both of the goats that were brought to the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement represent Christ, but let me explain why this cannot be true. The reason many believe that the scapegoat represents Jesus is because Jesus became our sin bearer, right? Our sins were placed upon Him, and so were the sins placed upon the head of the scapegoat, as we read. However, there’s an important point that many overlook when thinking the scapegoat represents Jesus. It’s true that Christ bore our sins when He died upon the cross, but the scapegoat did not die, did he? No, it

was left alive. It's demise came sometime later. In **Hebrews 9:22** the Bible says, "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Was the scapegoat's blood shed? No! In **Hebrews 9:6, 7** it says on the Day of Atonement the high priest went into the most holy place of the sanctuary with blood. Was it the blood of the scapegoat? No, it was the Lord's goat, because again, the scapegoat didn't die! And in **Hebrews 10:19** it says we are to have the boldness by faith to enter the holiest, by what? "The blood of Jesus."

You see, the Atonement had more than one aspect to it. Through the death of the Lord's goat atonement was made "for the people" it says, and with the scapegoat another aspect of the atonement was made at a later time. The crucifixion of Christ was represented in the courtyard of the sanctuary at the altar of sacrifice when our sins were placed upon Him, but the scapegoat had the sins placed upon him at a much later date in the sequence of events. Jesus had our sins placed upon Him over 2000 years ago, but in reality the scapegoat still has not had those sins placed upon him.

And so, in the earthly sanctuary when atonement was made for the people during the first phase of the atonement, that goat had to die, but when it was made with the scapegoat at a later time, it did not have to die, but was still necessary to bring the Day of Atonement to an end, which has not yet happened in the heavenly sanctuary, and things weren't completely wrapped up until the "fit man" came back into the camp without the scapegoat. And so, the Lord's goat was killed for the forgiveness of sin and the scapegoat was used for the purpose of blotting them out; that's the difference.

Let's read what Moses said about this. In **Exodus 32:32** he pled in behalf of Israel that sinned, and he said to the Lord, "if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Also in **Revelation 3:5** Jesus said, "He that overcomes, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

You see, we get our name registered in the Lamb's book of life when we accept Christ as our Saviour, but we need to understand that it can be blotted out if we do not remain faithful as I mentioned before. And so, there is a blotting out of sin that must take place if we would be saved in the end, and that will happen when Jesus, our great High Priest, transfers our sins that were placed upon Him, and He then places them upon the head of the scapegoat.

Now here's another reason why the 144,000 cannot be represented by the "fit man" that leads the scapegoat into the wilderness, and it's because they themselves don't know when human probation closes. The truth is, no human being is capable of leading the scapegoat, or Satan, into the wilderness, because if a perfect angel, like Gabriel, couldn't

stop Satan by himself after a three week struggle when the devil was trying to control the mind of King Cyrus, as it says in **Daniel 10:13**, and we'll be reading that in a few minutes, but needed the aide of Michael, which was the name Jesus went by before He was born into this world, then how can a human being who is inferior in every way to the most powerful holy angel there is, and one who never sinned, be capable of binding Satan, even after they are perfect in character as the 144,000 will be? There's just something wrong with that picture.

Now get this, the great controversy going on in this world is a battle between who? Between Satan and the 144,000? No friend, it's between Christ and Satan. This battle started out in heaven between Christ and Satan when he was cast out; continued on when Christ was victorious over Satan during His wilderness temptation; continued on at the cross as Jesus yielded His life as the perfect sacrifice; and it will end with Christ being victorious when He destroys Satan and his followers in the lake of fire. And so, this is a personal issue that can only be settled between Christ and Satan. In other words, it will also be Christ who binds Satan for 1000 years in a land not inhabited, or in the wilderness, or in the bottomless pit.

And here's another thing, who raises the wicked dead at the second resurrection at the end of the 1000 years mentioned in **1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17**? It will be Christ, identified there as "the archangel," not that Jesus is an angel, but chief among the angels, or ruler of the angels, because that's what the word archangel means. And so, the same One who binds Satan with the chain and casts him into the bottomless pit, as it says in **Revelation 20:1-3**, is the same One represented by the "fit man," does that make sense? And now I just for sure gave it away, didn't I? The "fit man" can be none other than Jesus Himself and not the 144,000 or any of the other possibilities I mentioned earlier. But let's carry on with the assumption that the "fit man" is represented by the 144,000 just to make sure, because there's much more evidence to present that the "fit man" cannot possibly be the 144,000.

In **Early Writings, page 15**, speaking of those who are alive when the Lord comes, which includes the 144,000, it says, "Then all faces gathered paleness, and those that God had rejected gathered blackness. Then we all cried out, **(even the 144,000)** who shall be able to stand? Is my robe spotless?" Such is the mindset of the 144,000 as Jesus is coming in the clouds of heaven, totally relying upon Him and Him alone to save them from those who have yielded their souls to the devil and have become just like the evil one in character. And in the sequence of events, this happens after the scapegoat is led away and after the seven last plagues are poured out. So how could the 144,000 be represented as the "fit man" when they themselves aren't sure of their own salvation at this point?

Certainly as described here, they are not “fit” to be the ones who have a mighty struggle with Satan and are able to lead him off to a land not inhabited.

In *The Great Controversy*, page 615 it says, “When the irrevocable decision of the sanctuary has been pronounced and the destiny of the world has been forever fixed, the inhabitants of the earth will know it not,” and that would include the 144,000. When Jesus places the sins upon the head of the scapegoat “they will know it not.” And as it’s being led away, “they will know it not.” And remember what Jesus Himself said in **Matthew 25:13** when He said, “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.” So, if the 144,000 don’t know when the scapegoat is led away, or when the Lord will come, how can they be the ones who lead him away? They cannot!

Now, we understand that there’s a lot of symbolism being described here, and it’s not a literal chain that binds Satan, because you can’t bind a spiritual being with a literal chain or kill him with a literal gun, but even though this is true, the 144,000 will not be aware of these things or feel capable of struggling with Satan, whether you look at all this as being literal or symbolic.

Also in *Life Sketches*, page 17 it says, “A decree went forth to slay the saints, which caused them to cry day and night for deliverance. This was the time of Jacob’s trouble. Then all the saints (**or all the 144,000**) cried out with anguish of spirit, and were delivered by the voice of God.” This “anguish of spirit” indicates deep emotional distress, we might even say they’re being tortured with doubt, and this is no condition to be in and still be a “fit man” who is capable of taking on Satan. It sounds more like the man who cried out, “Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief.” And remember, Jesus said, “without me you can do (**how much?**) nothing.” And that goes for the 144,000 as well.

And so up until the time they are delivered by the voice of God, the 144,000 are not going to be mentally prepared to lead the scapegoat into the wilderness. Certainly not physically, and certainly not spiritually given the fact that they are in anguish of spirit and crying out, “who shall be able to stand?” and saying “Is my robe spotless.” And besides, all this takes place long after the sins have been placed upon the head of the scapegoat and led away by the “fit man.”

Now let’s talk for a minute about the scapegoat, or Satan being led into “a land not inhabited,” or into “the wilderness,” as we read in **Leviticus 16**, because there’s another description of this same event taking place in **Revelation 20:1-3** as we read a few minutes ago where the apostle John says, Satan was chained up and “cast into the bottomless pit.” And if you read on in this chapter you’ll find that there’s a thousand years mentioned when the righteous will be in heaven with the Lord and all the wicked remain in the grave

during that same thousand years with Satan having no one to tempt, that's how he's bound. He's bound by a chain of circumstances beyond his control with no one to lead astray. He's bound, or stuck here on this earth for a thousand years with nowhere to go during the time when this world has become a land not inhabited, or an uninhabited wilderness, and this same scene is described in the Old Testament by Jeremiah.

Let's take a look at it. **Jeremiah 4:23-26**. Jeremiah says, "I beheld the earth, and, lo, *it was* without form (**in Hebrew that means "wilderness"**), and void (**or "empty" of people**); and the heavens, and they *had* no light. (**This is not talking about the first two verses in Genesis 1 as to what the earth looked like before the seven days of creation, but what the earth is going to look like during the 1000 years we just read about. How do we know that? Jeremiah continues**) I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, *there was* no man, (**uninhabited**) and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place *was* (**what?**) a wilderness (**just like Leviticus 16:21 says**), and all the cities thereof were broken down (**when?**) at the presence of the LORD, *and* by his fierce anger." Because remember, He has changed into His garments of vengeance.

By the way, what we read in **Revelation 20:1-3** is another reason why Jesus cannot be represented by the scapegoat. The scapegoat, or Satan, is the one who will be cast into the bottomless pit and chained up there for 1000 years. Can Christ be chained up for 1000 years while the saints are in heaven? Of course not. It's "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan" who will be confined to the desolate earth for a thousand years, which will then be like a wilderness, and a land without inhabitant, and he will at last suffer the full penalty, not just of his own sins, but for all the sins of those who were forgiven by the blood of the sacrifice, which sins were transferred by the High Priest and placed upon Satan's head as the scapegoat, and finally fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour him and all who chose to follow his lead, as it says in **Revelation 20:9**.

And so, Satan is going to burn for a long time, and each wicked person who rejected Christ will suffer in proportion to what they have done during this life, according to what they have done "in the body," as it says in **2 Corinthians 5:10**. And once all the wicked are burned up, the great plan of redemption will have reached its complete accomplishment, with the final eradication of sin and sinners.

Now let's look at **Revelation 20:1** one more time, because in this verse John saw an "angel come down from heaven," and if you still have questions about whether or not Jesus can be referred to as an angel, read **Revelation 10:1** where He is referred to as a mighty angel and described the same way in **Revelation 4:3**.

In **Revelation 20:1** John saw, “an angel come down from heaven having **(what?)** the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.” There are two points in this verse by which this angel here named is unmistakably referring to Jesus Christ. The first is that he’s the One who has the keys of hell and of death, or the bottomless pit, and that’s confirmed in **Revelation 1:18** when Jesus Himself said He is the One who has those keys, and the second is that He is the only One who has the power to bind the devil and restrain his influence, because that’s what that chain represents.

The angel Gabriel doesn’t have that kind of power, because of what it says in **Daniel 10:13**, which we’ll get to, don’t worry, and certainly the 144,000 don’t have that kind of power either. And here’s another point that refers to Christ as the “fit man.” In **2 Peter 2:4** it says, “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, **(and remember, it was Michael, or Jesus and His angels that cast Satan and his angels out of heaven to begin with. So we know what member of the Godhead we’re talking about here)** “For if God **(or Christ)** spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, **(or the bottomless pit)** and delivered *them* into **(what?)** chains of darkness, **(there’s that chain again)** to be reserved unto judgment” and so forth.

And also let’s read **Jude 5, 6**, “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he **(Christ)** hath reserved in **(what?)** everlasting chains under darkness **(just like Jeremiah said)** unto the judgment of the great day.”

And so, very clearly here in all these verses it is Jesus who has the keys of hell and of death, and also the chain to bind the devil and his angels, showing that Jesus is the only One who has the power and the ability to do so.

Now let’s look at this Battle Gabriel was in for a minute. I mentioned this several times, and now I want to read it in **Daniel 10:13**, and a Bible concordance is really helpful in understanding this verse if you don’t understand Hebrew, which most people don’t. **Daniel 10:13** says, “But the prince **(or “the ruler”, which was king Cyrus)** of the kingdom of Persia withstood me **(in other words, Cyrus was opposed to what Gabriel was trying to influence him to do, and Satan was also there trying to influence him in the opposite direction for)** one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael **(meaning “who is like God,” which is Christ)**, one of the chief princes, **(“one” meaning “first” and chief princes meaning “first in place” or that He was there at the “beginning,” which also describes Christ)** came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”

Now commenting on this, *Prophets and Kings*, page 571 says this, "While Satan was striving to influence Medo-Persia to show disfavor to God's people, angels worked in behalf of the exiles. Through Daniel we are given a glimpse of this struggle between good and evil. For three weeks Gabriel wrestled with the powers of darkness, seeking to counteract the influences at work on the mind of Cyrus; and before the contest closed, Christ Himself came to Gabriel's aid." And then **Daniel 10:13** is quoted.

So, here's the bottom line as to why one of the angels cannot be the "fit man." As strong as Gabriel is, and there's evidence that he is the mightiest of the angels, in fact he's the one who took Lucifer's place as the covering cherub after he was cast out of heaven, and there's also evidence that he is the one who appeared to all the prophets in the Bible; and if a mighty angel like Gabriel could not deal with Satan by himself until Micheal, who is Christ, showed up, how could he deal with Satan by himself as the "fit man"? He cannot. And so no angel, even one as mighty as Gabriel, could lead the scapegoat away and bind him. But for this verse in **Daniel 10:13** the case could be made for Gabriel being the "fit man," but he is not; the "fit man" is the One who came to help him when he was struggling with the powers of darkness.

In **Matthew 12:29** Jesus said, "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house." In these words, Jesus refers to Satan as the "strong man" and this fallen world as his house, and Jesus is the "fit man" that will spoil his house. It's Jesus who will bind "the strong man" and totally defeat him in the end, because a strong man may be strong, but that doesn't mean he's fit, and certainly Satan is not morally fit to take on the One who already defeated him by rising from the dead. And by the way, **Romans 8:37** says, "we (**too**) are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." So we should have no misgivings about whether or not we can be victorious over the "strong man" just as Jesus was victorious, which includes everyone that has ever named the name of Christ, and not just the 144,000.

Now, before we close I want to share another important point for us to consider. When reading **Leviticus 16**, and I encourage you to do that and not just take my word for it, but once we reach **verse 24** with the scapegoat having already been led away and the high priest already having changed his garments, things relating to Aaron as high priest in the typical service, and Jesus our High Priest in the antitypical service, begin to change. What do I mean by that? When you start reading from **verse 24** and onward there are things that applied to Aaron that do not apply to Christ. Even in some of the earlier verses like **verses 6** and **11** this is true, as you can read for yourself. For example in **verse 24** it says the high priest was to wash his flesh and offer a burnt offering for himself, which Jesus

didn't have to do, because He was without sin and needed no forgiveness or cleansing. And so, there were some things that Aaron had to do that Jesus does not have to do, and you can't equate the two in every single instance as you go through this chapter. What Jesus does in the heavenly sanctuary is symbolic of what Aaron had to literally do in the earthly sanctuary. And so, sometimes things that are symbolic are different in some respects to that which is literal.

In ***Bible Commentary, volume 5, page 1128***, we're told that we should, "Never, in any way, leave the slightest impression upon human minds that a taint of, or inclination to, corruption rested upon Christ, or that He in any way yielded to corruption." And certainly we need to be careful not to do that when studying about the Day of Atonement and comparing the work of the earthly high priest who had sin, to that of our heavenly High Priest who had no sin.

Now why is all this important? It's important because there are some who say that Jesus cannot be the "fit man," because as the scapegoat is being led away, Jesus our High Priest has to be doing other things, like washing Himself and making sacrifice for Himself etc., which again, Aaron had to do, but what Jesus does not have to do. Therefore Jesus will be absolutely free to take care of the Scapegoat as the seven last plagues are falling and not be unnecessarily cumbered about with the things Aaron was required to do.

At the beginning when I was quoting from ***Spaulding and Megan, page 2***, I said we'd be coming back to those 6 points, remember? And here they are once again: **Number 1**, in the sequence of events the high priest comes out of the Most Holy place and confesses the sins of Israel upon the head of the Scape Goat. **Number 2**, then He puts on the garments of vengeance. **Number 3**, then the plagues will come upon the wicked, but she says, "they do not come till Jesus puts on those garments." In other words, when Jesus puts on those garments of vengeance it's payback time, and vengeance upon the scapegoat will begin to be meted out as Jesus, the "fit man," is leading him away while the plagues are falling. In **Romans 12:19** the Lord said, "Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." It cannot be paid by anyone else. And we can be sure that His judgment will be fair and just, and everyone will get exactly what's coming to them, except for those whose sins have been placed upon the head of Satan. **Number 4**, "Then while the plagues are falling, the Scape Goat is being led away," and as I already mentioned, there's no reason why Jesus can't do that as He will not be occupied with doing the things that Aaron was required to do after those sins were transferred to the head of the scapegoat. **Number 5**, "The great white cloud (**was**) entirely separate from the sanctuary," which again means Jesus is not being cumbered with the things that Aaron still had to do, but instead will be free to do the job of the "fit man." And **number 6**, the seven last plagues are going to take

a little while before the Lord comes, that's why the prophet says it "takes time to lead away the Scape Goat into the land of forgetfulness after the sins were put on his head." While this is happening we're told that "a mighty struggle" will take place while Satan is being led away, which means that Satan is not going to go quietly; it's just not in his DNA to give up without a fight, and fight he will. And we ought to be thankful that Jesus is the "fit man" who will come out on top when the struggle is over.

We need to understand that everything about the earthly sanctuary represents the work of Christ as our great High Priest in heaven, and in the book *Education*, page 36 it says, "Through Christ was to be fulfilled the purpose of which the tabernacle (**the earthly tabernacle**) was a symbol." Now let me ask you, is it the purpose of Christ to fulfill every aspect of the heavenly sanctuary service on the Day of Atonement except the last one, which was to make sure the scapegoat didn't make its way back into the camp? No friends, that doesn't make sense. All the symbols of the earthly sanctuary that points to the heavenly sanctuary will be fulfilled by our High Priest.

I want you to imagine yourself flying a drone with a camera on it over the sanctuary, and as you're looking at it from above you will notice that it's laid out in the shape of a cross upon which Jesus was laid. In the courtyard, which represents this earth where Jesus sacrificed His life, we see the altar of sacrifice where Jesus sacrificed His life and straight in line with that is the laver, representing Christ's baptism in the river Jordan by John the Baptist, not that He needed to have His sins washed away, because He didn't have any, but to set an example for us to follow and to fulfill all righteousness Jesus said.

As we continue looking from above we see that the feet and legs of Christ follow in line with the altar and the laver. Then as we look into the Holy Place we see His arms stretched out, one toward the candle stick representing that Jesus was born of the Spirit as it says in **Luke 1:35**, and with the other arm stretched out toward the table of show bread on the other side representing Himself as the bread of life, **John 6:48**. Then right in the center where His chest and heart is we see the golden altar of incense representing His righteousness which He gives to us, and then at the top of the cross His head protrudes through the veil and into the Most Holy Place where the Ark and the Ten Commandments are, which is a transcript of His character, or how His life was marked by perfect obedience to that law and the reason He can be our perfect substitute. Then He rises up and walks out of the Holy and Most Holy places and confesses all our sins upon the head of the scapegoat. And then what? Then He wipes His hands together and says there, My work is done. No! Then He, as the "fit man," leads Satan away to the land of forgetfulness where he will ultimately perish.

Now, if everything about the sanctuary represents the work that Jesus our great High Priest performs for our benefit, why would He not also perform the work of the “fit man?” That’s the only thing that makes sense! All that He performed prior to placing our sins upon the head of the scapegoat was for our salvation, and will He then hand off the last part of His work to someone else? Absolutely not! Absolutely not!

Not long ago someone shared the following statement with me about the “fit man,” and in closing I’ll share it with you, because it’s like putting a nail in a sure place.

In ***Word to the Little Flock, page 12*** Ellen White writes the following, “The Lord shew me in vision, more than one year ago, that Brother Crosier had the true light on the cleansing of the Sanctuary, &c; **(or everything else that deals with the sanctuary)** and that it was his will, that Brother C. should write out the view which he gave us in the *Day-Star Extra*, February 7, 1846. I feel fully authorized by the Lord, to recommend that Extra, to every saint.”

And so clearly, Sister White endorsed Brother Crosier’s understanding of “the cleansing of the sanctuary, &c;” which would include all things having to do with the Day of Atonement, because the cleansing of the sanctuary is what the Day of Atonement is all about.

And here’s what brother Crosier wrote in that Day-Star Extra, “At the appearing of Christ, as taught from Revelation 20, **(which means that the angel who appears in Revelation 20 that comes down from heaven is Christ and not Gabriel or some other angel)** “At the appearing of Christ, as taught from Revelation 20, Satan is to be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, which act **(Christ’s act)** and place are significantly symbolized by the ancient High Priest sending the scape-goat into a separate and uninhabited wilderness.”

Friends, this is **Leviticus 16** and **Revelation 20** language that is connected in this quote, and because Brother Crosier had the truth on this subject, we know that it is not only Christ’s “act” to lead the scapegoat into the wilderness as the “fit man,” but in doing so He is vindicating His own character through the great plan of redemption, which the sanctuary doctrine, and especially the Day of Atonement illustrates.

In ***Testimonies for the Church, volume 3, page 255*** we’re told that, “God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and a teachable spirit, and all should decide from the weight of evidence.” And as you consider this subject the weight of evidence falls heavy on the side of Christ being the “fit man.”

I'd like to close by reading **Revelation 20:7-9**, because here's what the "fit man" is going to do to the "strong man" in the end, after the thousand years we read about have come to an end. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, **(and who's going loose him? The 144,000? No friends, it will be the same One who put him there. He will be loosed by the "fit man" when that chain of circumstances is removed so he can once again resume his deceptions one last time, and just as the scapegoat perished in the end, so will Satan and all his followers)** "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, **(which includes the antichrist, those who are raised from the dead, and the whole host of the wicked to receive their final punishment)** to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. **(This means that the wicked far outnumber the righteous, and that's the way it has always been)** And they went up on the breadth of the earth, **(the wicked did)** and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: **(to take and conquer it, but what happens?)** and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

You see, there will be no eternal torment in the fires of hell that never go out as the majority of Christians believe. This fire that comes down from God out of heaven is hell fire, which is not burning now, and when the fire has consumed all there is to consume, it will go out, and all the wicked who have ever lived will be no more forever; they will be as though they had not been, says **Obadiah 1:16**, and then God will "create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" says **Isaiah 65:17**. What a promise!

So we have a choice; do we want to be inside the beloved city when these things take place, or do we want to be on the outside? That should be an easy question to answer, but it takes commitment and full surrender of our will to the will of the One and only "fit man" "who loved us and gave Himself for us." Which will it be, my friends? The choice is ours, and may it be the right one.