

## ATONEMENT WITH THE SCAPEGOAT

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Almost alone among Christian people, Adventists hold that the scapegoat of the sanctuary service represents Satan. This position was first set forth authoritatively by O.R.L. Crozier in the Day Star Extra in 1846. It received the endorsement of the Spirit of Prophecy and was unanimously adopted as an established tenet of Adventist doctrine.

Concerning the scapegoat transaction, the Levitical record reads:

"And he (Aaron) shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering . . . And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness . . . . And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, 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, 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 in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:5, 7-10, 20-22).

From this Scripture it is clear that:

1. The sins that are brought out of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement are placed on the scapegoat.
2. Only the sins of penitent Israel, i.e., the righteous, are brought out of the sanctuary.
3. It is the sins of the saved which are placed on the scapegoat.
4. The purpose of this transaction is "to make an atonement with him."

### The Spirit of Prophecy Teaching

In research to date, we are not aware of one recognized teacher and writer among the early Sabbath-keeping Adventists who dissented from this position. After all, the Spirit of Prophecy could hardly be more definite upon this matter:

"As in the final atonement the sins of the truly penitent are to be blotted from the records of heaven, no more to be remembered or come into mind, so in the type they were borne away into the wilderness, forever separated from the congregation.

"Since Satan is the originator of sin, the direct instigator of all the sins that caused the death of the Son of God, justice demands that Satan shall suffer the final punishment. Christ's work for the redemption of men and the purification of the universe from sin, will be closed by the removal of sin from the heavenly sanctuary and the placing of these sins upon Satan, who will bear the final penalty."--Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 358.

"When the ministration in the holy of holies had been completed, and the sins of Israel had been removed from the sanctuary by virtue of the blood of the sin-offering, then the scapegoat was presented alive before the Lord; and in presence of the congregation the high priest 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' (Leviticus 16:21). In like manner, when the work of atonement in the heavenly sanctuary has been completed, then in the presence of God and heavenly angels, and the host of the redeemed, the sins of God's people will be placed upon Satan; he will be declared guilty of all the evil which he has caused them to commit. And as the scapegoat was sent away into a land not inhabited, so Satan will be banished to the desolate earth, an uninhabited and dreary wilderness."--Great Controversy, p. 658.

"In the typical service the high priest, having made the atonement for Israel, came forth and blessed the congregation. So Christ, at the close of His work as mediator, will appear, 'without sin unto salvation' (Hebrews 9:28), to bless His waiting people with eternal life. As the priest, in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the scapegoat, so Christ will place all these sins upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin. The scapegoat, bearing the sins of Israel, was sent away 'unto a land not inhabited' (Leviticus 16:22); so Satan, bearing the guilt of all the sins which he has caused God's people to commit, will be for a thousand years confined to the earth, which will then be desolate, without inhabitant, and he will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked."--Ibid., pp. 485-486.

If after reading the above statements, the reader has any doubt left in his mind as to what the servant of the Lord means, he should have none after reading the following statement:

"Satan did not then exult as he had done. He had hoped to break up the plan of salvation; but it was laid too deep. And now by the death of Christ he knew that he himself must finally die, and his kingdom be given to Jesus. He held a council with his angels. He had prevailed nothing against the Son of God, and now they must increase their efforts and with their power and cunning turn to His followers. They must prevent all whom they could from receiving the salvation purchased for them by Jesus. By so doing Satan could still work against the government of God. Also it would be for his own interest to keep from Jesus as many as possible. For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will at last be rolled back upon the originator of sin, and he must bear their punishment, while those who do not accept salvation through Jesus will suffer the penalty of their own sins."--Early Writings, p. 178.

## Embarrassment

There has been no other point which has been so much the object of bitter attack and misrepresentation among the so-called Evangelical segment of Protestantism than the historic Adventist teaching on the scapegoat. Adventists have been repeatedly charged with making Satan their sin-bearer and Saviour. In order to escape the embarrassing charge, Adventist theologians and teachers in recent years have sought to explain this scapegoat transaction in terms that would be more acceptable to our non-Adventist friends. (To remove any needless cause for misunderstanding is a laudable objective). Accordingly, Adventist theologians have come up with an explanation using the illustration of the master criminal and his minor accomplice. The argument runs like this: Satan is the master criminal. Man is his minor accomplice. Justice demands that the master criminal be punished for his part in causing his accomplice to commit the crime.

Now this illustration is true per se. Satan will certainly suffer for all of his sins which include his part in causing the wicked and righteous to sin. But what we must realize is that this has nothing to do with the scapegoat transaction. The Levitical record teaches, and the Spirit of Prophecy teaches, that those sins which are brought out of the sanctuary are placed on the scapegoat. These are the sins of penitent Israel--their own personal sins which were sent into the sanctuary during the daily service. To say that our High Priest will confess Satan's part in causing the wicked and righteous to sin over the head of Satan does not get us out of a problem: it creates a greater one. For Satan's part in causing others to sin is Satan's sin, and how could we imply that Satan's sins are removed from the sanctuary by the blood of Christ?

No amount of human logic, reason, or mathematics can lawfully make the scapegoat transaction teach anything else than this: When the sinner came to the sanctuary in the daily service he confessed his own personal sins, and through the blood of the sin offering his sins were transferred to the sanctuary (see Leviticus 4-6; Great Controversy, p. 421). There they rested until the great day of atonement. Then the high priest, having made the final atonement for penitent Israel, removed these same sins from the sanctuary and put them upon the head of scapegoat. So the Spirit of Prophecy says, "For the sins of those who are redeemed by the blood of Christ will at last be rolled back upon the originator of sin, and he must bear their punishment, while those who do not accept salvation through Jesus will suffer the penalty of their own sins."--Early Writings, p. 178.

Many Adventist theologians have been embarrassed by this statement from Early Writings. The late M. L. Andreasen was probably one of the first to lead out in departing from the historic concept that Satan will bear the actual sins of the righteous. Those personally acquainted with this eminent theologian report that he admitted that he was at a loss to explain the statement in early writings. The writers of Questions on Doctrine set forth the view that Satan does not bear the sins of the righteous "in any sense or degree."--(page 400). It is interesting to notice that this book, which quotes liberally from the Spirit of Prophecy in most sections, does not cite one reference when it comes to the scapegoat. It teaches contrary to the Spirit of Prophecy position. Questions on Doctrine says that Satan bears the responsibility "for his part in all the sins he has caused others,

both righteous and wicked, to commit"--(page 397), and endeavors to show that this is the significance of the scapegoat transaction. Actually the scapegoat transaction has nothing to do with putting Satan's part in causing others to sin upon his head. These sins are already upon his head, and are certainly not brought out of the sanctuary to be placed on him. Furthermore, it is entirely erroneous to involve "both righteous and wicked" (see Questions on Doctrine, pp. 397, 399, 400) in the scapegoat transaction. The wicked are not included in the transaction. Again we repeat, it is the sins of righteous Israel which are put upon the scapegoat. There is no escaping from the fact that this is what the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy teach.

Among Adventist Bible teachers and scholars, this scapegoat transaction remains the most embarrassing feature of Adventist teaching. Those who believe in the Spirit of Prophecy are generally at a loss to explain why Satan has to suffer for the sins of the righteous when Jesus has already suffered for them. After all, the Bible says that not only are "the iniquities of the children of Israel" (Leviticus 16:21) put upon the head of the goat, but also that these sins are put on him "to make an atonement with him" (verse 10). Then why does Satan make an atonement with the sins of the righteous when Jesus has already made an atonement for the righteous? Adventist teachers and scholars have been so much at a loss to explain this, yes, even terrified of this problem, that many have thought to escape the problems by denying the fact that Satan ultimately bears the sins of the righteous. Alas, "as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him" (Amos 5:19). For those who deny the teaching that the sins of the righteous are placed on Satan must deny the Spirit of Prophecy. Once the Spirit of Prophecy is thought to be unreliable in one important area of teaching, what confidence remains in any other portion that runs contrary to our thinking?

### An Atonement for a Broken Law

There is nothing Satan hates so much as the idea that Christ will put the sins of the redeemed upon him and make "an atonement with him." He not only rejects this concept of divine justice, but he wants God's people to take his side and reject the whole idea too. To date, Satan is making some progress, all because our minds have been blinded to the meaning of this climactic and thrilling sequel to Christ's atonement.

Many are confident that they have an unanswerable objection when they ask: "Why does Satan have to suffer for the sins of the righteous when Jesus has already suffered for them?" If the objector cannot answer that question, neither can he answer this question, "Why do the wicked have to suffer for their sins when Jesus has suffered for them?" Did not Jesus suffer for all sin? Then why does divine justice demand further suffering on account of the sins of the righteous or the wicked?

First, let us consider the significance of Christ's atonement. Two things made the death of Christ necessary for salvation: the law and sin. "Sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law" (1 Corinthians 15:56). By His suffering and death, Christ exhausted the penalty of a broken law. His was an atonement to satisfy the law which demanded the death of the transgressor.

"Through disobedience Adam fell. The law of God had been broken. The divine government had been dishonored, and justice demanded that the penalty of transgression be paid. . . . He (Christ) pledged Himself to accomplish our full salvation in a way satisfactory to the demands of God's justice, and consistent with the exalted holiness of His law."--Selected Messages, vol. 1, pp. 308, 309.

"He has proffered Himself as an atonement. His gushing blood, His broken body, satisfy the claims of the broken law, and thus He bridges the gulf that sin has made."--Ibid, p. 341.

Christ died for the sins of the whole world (see 1 John 2:2). He died for the ungodly (see Romans 5:6). As far as the broken law is concerned, Christ has satisfied the demands of divine justice of all men. Thus ". . . the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Romans 5:18). We repeat again: Christ's death was an atonement for the broken law. His atoning work in the sanctuary is concerned with the broken law.

### An Atonement for the Sufferings of Christ

But there is another important aspect of the sufferings and death of Christ that we should consider. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus "tasted the sufferings of death for every man."--Desire of Ages, p. 694. If God had not interposed, His Son would have died in the Garden without the Jews and Roman soldiers doing anything to cause His death. The sin of the world separated Him from God, brought upon Him the horror of eternal separation, and would have slain Him that terrible night. But God had to prolong the scene, or man would have failed to learn the true nature of his sin. God gave His Son into the hands of men so that they would act out what was in their hearts. Satan was permitted to demonstrate before the universe what was in his heart. He was thus proven to be a murderer. He showed what was the real purpose of his rebellion (see John 8:44; Desire of Ages, p. 761). It was also manifested that man was infected by the same spirit (see 1 John 3:8; Romans 8:7). At Calvary man acted out his hidden hatred of, and will to kill, God. Calvary proves that the whole world is guilty of the murder of the Son of God (see Desire of Ages, p. 745). Humanity too slow to learn the lesson on Calvary.

"The cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the pain that, from its very inception, sin has brought to the heart of God. Every departure from right, every deed of cruelty, every failure of humanity to reach His ideal, brings grief to Him."--Education, p. 263.

"By every sin Jesus is wounded afresh."--Desire of Ages, p. 300.

While Jesus' death satisfied justice because of the broken law, how will justice be satisfied because of the sufferings of Christ? Sin **not** only breaks the law, but it is a crime that causes Christ to suffer the pangs of Calvary. Sin has brought down the Son of God from His exalted position and has taken Him through the shame and suffering of Calvary; yea, He yet suffers the pain of it all. Christ atoned for a broken law, but who will atone for the sufferings of Christ? Does not good jurisprudence demand that justice be met for the sufferings of Christ.

As far as humanity is concerned, we might say that: The sufferings of Jesus = the sins of the wicked and those of the righteous.

The wicked, in bearing their own sins, make atonement for their part in the sufferings of Christ. They suffer "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," the end of which is eternal death. But the righteous have also inflicted suffering on Jesus. Justice still demands "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Satan is brought forth as the anti-typical scapegoat after God's people have been sealed and saved eternally by the blood of Christ. The sins of the redeemed are rolled back on Satan's head, and God makes "an atonement with him" (Leviticus 16:10) for the part that the righteous had in causing the sufferings of Christ. "Since Satan is the originator of sin, the direct instigator of all the sins that caused the death of the Son of God, justice demands that Satan shall suffer the final punishment (of the sins of the truly penitent--context)."--Partriarchs and Prophets, p. 358. As well as this, Satan will suffer for his own sins which brought pain to the Creator. Thus, in every way, justice will be fully satisfied.

#### Christ's Atonement Does Not Cancel Sin

The historic Adventist teaching of the sanctuary service gives us a unique concept of Christ's disposition of sin. He did not die to cancel our sins, as the lesson of the sanctuary so clearly teaches:

"Important truths concerning the atonement are taught by the typical service. A substitute was accepted in the sinner's stead; but the sin was not cancelled by the blood of the victim. A means was thus provided by which it was transferred to the sanctuary. . . .

"As anciently the sins of the people were by faith placed upon the sin-offering, and through its blood transferred, in figure, to the earthly sanctuary; so in the new covenant the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ, and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary....

"When the high priest, by virtue of the blood of the sin-offering, removed the sins from the sanctuary, he placed them upon the scapegoat. When Christ, by virtue of His own blood, removes the sins of His people from the heavenly sanctuary at the close of His ministration, He will place them upon Satan, who, in the execution of the judgment, must bear the final penalty. . . ." --Great Controversy, pp. 420-422.

According to the above, the blood of Christ provides for removal of sin; first, from the sinner to the sanctuary; second, from the sanctuary to Satan. Divine forgiveness, therefore, does not mean that God overlooks sin. He can never do this. He can never forgive a man that is in sin. But the atonement which He has provided in Christ, does, if accepted, remove the sin. Forgiveness, therefore, means deliverance from, and victory over, sin. Is it not true that Laodicea is languishing through want of this true concept of justification by faith?

Furthermore, the justice of God is involved in the moving of sin back upon Satan's head. The great controversy is over the question, "Who is responsible for sin?" Satan maintains that God is responsible. He claims that His law

is the enemy of peace. Each man who fails to repent also casts the blame upon God, as mother Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat (i.e.: Thou, God, made the serpent, and the blame must rest on Thee)" (Genesis 3:13). If the sinner would repent, he would be free from the claims of the law through the atonement of Christ, and could have his sin placed upon Satan. But in insisting that God is responsible for sin, he takes sides with Satan, and virtually refuses God the right to put his sins upon the head of their originator.

On the other hand, the repentant sinner justifies God. He confesses that God is not responsible for sin. When a sinner thus justifies God, God responds by justifying him through the merits of Christ's atonement. The believer cooperates with God by rolling the responsibility of sin back upon Satan.

### The Fit Man

There is another important aspect to the scapegoat transaction: a fit man was appointed to lead the goat into the wilderness:

And Aaron shall lay both hands upon the head of the live goat, 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, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.--Leviticus 16:21.

The sanctuary service could only be successful in disposing of sin as each part of the service was successfully performed. Once the scapegoat had all the sins of Israel upon his head, it was all-important that he was safely led into the wilderness. If a careless hand allowed the goat to escape and return to the camp, the whole service would have failed to separate sin from the congregation.

The antitype of leading away the scapegoat by the hand of the fit man is brought to view by the Revelator:

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 laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, 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 (Revelation 20:1-3).

We shall offer some reasons why the fit man represents the work that Christ accomplishes through the final generation of saints:

1. The fit man was of the congregation of Israel whose sins were symbolically blotted out in the final atonement. According to the Jewish records of what transpired on the Day of Atonement, the whole congregation of Israel escorted the scapegoat to the wilderness. It was to their interest to see the symbolic originator of sin safely removed from the camp. It was not possible for every member of the congregation to take hold of the goat; yet all Israel was represented in the fit man. All Israel was one with the fit man as he led the goat away.

2. In the symbolic language of the Revelator, the leading away of the antitypical scapegoat is brought to view in the following words: "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having a great chain in his hand." (Revelation 20:1). Before anyone hastily concludes that here is evidence that the leading away of the antitypical scapegoat is by angel and not human hands, let him consider that the sacred work of God through His people is generally symbolized by angels throughout the book of Revelation. Every Adventist recognizes that the three angel messages of Revelation 14 represent a world-wide gospel proclamation by the people of God. The outpouring of the latter rain and its mighty effect on God's people is also symbolized by an angel: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory" (Revelation 18:1). If the angel of Revelation who comes down from heaven with great power represents a particular phase of the work of the final generation of saints, then would it not be reasonable to consider that the angel of Revelation 20 who comes down from heaven with a great chain also represents another phase of the work of the saints?

3. We should consider the divine purpose in the creation of man. Man was brought into existence immediately following the expulsion of Satan from heaven (Story of Redemption, p. 19; Early Writings, p. 146). This is most significant. God proceeded to meet the challenge of Satan's rival kingdom by saying, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26). Man was to be an instrument of the Divine in the overthrow of Satan's kingdom. Through man, God planned to demonstrate His manifold wisdom unto the universe (Ephesians 3:9-11) and so doing uphold the honor of His government. "I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7).

Even the fall of man did not change the divine purpose in his creation. While Satan was gloating over his triumph over man in Eden, the Lord said to the adversary, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15 RSV). God thereby promised Satan that man would yet defeat him. While the promise of victory over Satan primarily refers to the man Jesus, it also embraces all of those included in the seed, as it is written,

"the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Romans 9:8).

"And the God of Peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly (Genesis 3:15 margin)" (Romans 16:20).

How fitting that the sanctuary service, which is a revelation of God's purpose for man (Education, p. 36), should climax with a cleansed and sealed man binding his great enemy who has bound the human race for six thousand years!

4. Adam was crowned king in Eden, but he lost his dominion to Satan who thereby became the prince of this world. Man is the lawful captive of the king of Babylon (Isaiah 14:4-16). He is bound in sin and affliction by the cruelest tyrant (Luke 13:16). How often we read in Scripture that God's people have been bound in chains by the enemy:

. . . the king of Assyria . . . took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with chains, and carried him to Babylon (2 Chronicles 33:11).

Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in chains, to carry him to Babylon (2 Chronicles 36:6, see also Jeremiah 39:7;52:11).

We read of others who were bound at the instigation of Satan: Joseph, Sampson, the Hebrew captives, the Christians who were persecuted by Saul of Tarsus, Peter, Paul and even Jesus Himself. Since he wrested the dominion from man, Satan has "the key of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 9:1,11)-- which is this earth made desolate by his rule. But the lost dominion shall be restored to God's people (Micah 4:8). The book of Daniel is concerned with this restoration. In the investigative judgment, the great antitypical Day of Atonement, the Son of man comes into the most holy place of the sanctuary before the Father and receives the lost dominion (Daniel 7:9, 10, 13, 14). Then Daniel shows that His people receive it with Christ:

But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever.

I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came (to the judgment-verse 9), and judgment was given to the saints of the most High . . .

But judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion . . . (Daniel 7:18, 21-22, 26).

Clearly, the judgment or Day of Atonement is the turning point in the history of man's captivity to Satan. As typified by the ancient tabernacle service, it is here that God's people have their sins blotted out forever. Having the seal of the living God upon them, they will be "eternally secure from the tempter's devices" (Testimonies, Vol. 5, p. 475). Then, as the prophet records, "They shall take away his dominion." Speaking of the final victory, Isaiah says:

"They shall take them captive, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors . . .

"Thou shalt take up this proverb against the King of Babylon (Satan), and say, How hath the oppressor ceased . . ." (Isaiah 14:2, 4).

The context of the above Scripture shows that the King of Babylon, Satan himself, is included among those who shall be taken "captive" by God's people. Again, the Scripture says:

He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet (Psalms 47:3; see also Revelation 2:26,27).

Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and

their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord (Psalms 149:5-9).

If God's people are to receive power over the nations (Revelation 2:26), if they are to bind their kings with chains, it is only proper to consider that the King of Babylon will be bound with a chain by the saints. So the Revelator says, "I saw an angel come down from heaven . . . and a great chain in his hand." And so the Psalmist says, "This honour have all His saints." This binding of the King of Babylon was foreshadowed in the ritual of the fit man and the scapegoat.

5. This brings us to the matter of timing. According to Early Writing, pp. 280, 281, the sins of God's people are placed upon Satan immediately after the close of probation, before the seven last plagues are poured out. But in The Great Controversy, p. 658, the same writer is just as definite that the sins of God's people are placed on Satan after the earth is desolated by the plagues and Christ's coming.

What is the answer to this seeming contradiction? The first statement is not speaking about the sins of all of God's people. "Jesus tarried a moment in the outer apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and the sins which had been confessed while he was in the most holy place were placed upon Satan, the originator of sin, who must suffer their punishment." The second statement refers to the sins of all the redeemed host.

Now the redeemed fall into two categories. Firstly, there are the ones who shall be alive at the coming of the Lord, whose sins were confessed while Christ was in the most holy place. This group is elsewhere called the 144,000. (With them will stand those who arise in the special resurrection at the voice of God, those who have died in the faith of the third angel's message. (See Daniel 12:1; Early Writing, p. 285; Great Controversy, p. 637). Secondly, there is the great host of the redeemed who shall be brought up from the dead at the resurrection of the just. According to the statements before us, the sins of the 144,000 are placed upon Satan at the commencement of the time of the seven last plagues; while the sins of the redeemed host of ages are placed upon Satan at the commencement of the millennium.

A reason may be found for this distinction from the type. When the sins were brought out of the sanctuary and placed on the scapegoat, a fit man was appointed to lead the goat away. If this man let the goat escape, sin would not be separated from Israel, but would return to the camp.

Now when the work of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary is accomplished, Christ must have the fit man to lead Satan away. This fit man must be from among the redeemed whose sins have been blotted out, i. e., the 144,000.

The fit man represents the 144,000 whom God will use to vanquish Satan in the final conflict. At the time of probation's close, God will have a sealed and sinless community of saints upon this earth. In answer to Satan's challenge that the law cannot be kept, God says, "Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). The

time has arrived for the sins of God's people to be put on Satan, "You misrepresented Me to men and caused them to sin. Here is a people who will never sin again, for once completely freed from sin, they will never go back to it. Therefore you are responsible for their sins which caused Me to suffer with My Son." Satan has no choice but to accept the challenge. He tries to effect his escape from the responsibility of the sins of the righteous, not by an effort to escape physically from this earth, but by a desperate effort to make one of the 144,000 sin. In the time of trouble, where there is no Mediator in the sanctuary, if one of the 144,000 sinned, the fit man would let the scapegoat escape. The honor of God's throne would be compromised. But no one will fail in this final test. It was seen that "like Jacob, everyone, without exception, was earnestly pleading and wrestling for deliverance" (EW 272). This is the climactic proof of the grace of God without which the first fruits (Revelation 14:4) would not be accepted. There could be no resurrection of the righteous unless it be proven that the blood of Christ is an eternal antidote for sin.

However, in this last struggle with Satan, the 144,000 gain the mastery over Satan. He who has led God's people captive for so long is at last defeated and led captive by the saints. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity." This work having been done, God's government having been vindicated before the universe in the saints, the resurrection of the righteous dead takes place. ". . . then in the presence of God and heavenly angels and the host of the redeemed the sins of God's people (the entire body of the saints) will be placed upon Satan. . . ." ---Great Controversy, p. 658.