

Romans 3:24-26,

"What God Does With Our Sins"

Romans 3:24-26, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [Mercy Seat] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

An Explanation For The Day Of Atonement

"Good morning. Let's open our Bibles to the book of Romans. We'll be looking at Romans chapter three and we'll begin with verse 24 reading through verse 26. Romans 3. We are recovering some territory. This is such fertile ground here in Romans that there are so many gems and jewels. I'm just greedy enough that I don't want to leave any of them on the ground, I want to pick them all up. And I want us to see them all, understand what we have in Christ. We need to know what it means to be a Christian. We need to know exactly why Christianity is different than any other religion on earth. **Romans 3:24** says that we are **"being justified freely, or as a gift, by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."** Last week we looked at what redemption meant. **"whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation (or what could that word be translated as?-Mercy Seat) through his blood (or in his blood) through faith."** Now, **"this"** what Jesus did, **"was to demonstrate God's righteousness, because in the forbearance of God, he passed over the sins previously committed."** The question comes up, was, well if Jesus is the only way of salvation, then how could God pass over sins that were committed before Jesus died? In other words, how could believers in the Old Testament be saved? They don't understand this. And he says,

'Well, Jesus did this in such a way that God in the ages past covered men's sin. When Jesus came he took away men's sin. It reads on and says, "For the demonstration" verse 26, "I say, of his righteousness at the present time, that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith"--where?--"in Jesus." This morning I want to talk to you about what God does with our sins. What does God do with our sins? In the Old Testament sins were covered up. In the Old Testament if you sinned, you would take a sacrifice to the priest in the Temple. Perhaps a lamb, and you would leave this lamb that did not have any blemish or any kind of defect, and you would lead it to the priest. You would confess your sin on the head of that lamb, laying your hand on the lambs head, symbolically placing the sin now on the lamb. The priest would knick the lamb's jugular vein, which would mercifully take the little lambs life, the lamb would pass out. But the priest would collect the blood of the lamb in a golden bowl and present it to the altar. There the lamb would be offered to God, your sin then was covered. Atonement had been made for your sin. The term in Hebrew for atonement, the word is in Hebrew kafar. And it means to cover. The word atonement means just a covering of some kind. In the Old Testament sins were not taken away, they were simply covered. With every lamb more sins would be covered, every lamb more sins would be covered, more lambs, more sins covered, until maybe there's this mount Everest of sin covered, you know, by the Lord. One day a year they had a special ceremony, on the day they called the Day of Atonement. And on the Day of Atonement they, the high priest would take two goats, two male goats. And he would take straws, two straws, and he would draw straws [cast lots, with some special Holy dice, in reality] and the goat that maybe got the long straw would be called the Lord's goat. The other goat would be called Azazel. The Lord's goat was sacrificed, its blood captured in a golden bowl. The high priest would then go in with the blood of this goat into the Holy of Holies (he could only do this once a year, and I've already described it to you) he would sprinkle the blood of this sacrificial goat upon whom the sins of all of Israel all the year long, all their sins had been placed on this goat. He would symbolically take the whole year's sins, put them on the goat, the goat would die, his blood would be shed, his blood would be offered before the Mercy Seat. The priest came out alive, and he would also take and again symbolically place the sins of the people on the goat called Azazel, and they would take this scapegoat, that's what it means to be a scapegoat, it means you get a bunch of stuff you don't deserve put on you, and you have to carry that around the rest of your life--the scapegoat would be taken out alive, outside the city gates, up over the Mount of Olives, and out into the wilderness of Judea. And there the goat would just walk and walk and walk, and

there would be a man stationed in the courtyard of the Temple. From the courtyard of the Temple you could look over the Eastern Gate, you could see the top of the Mount of Olives, there would be a priest standing on the top of the Mount of Olives who could look out into the wilderness. And when the goat disappeared and it went beyond out of distance of the horizon that priest on top of the Mount of Olives would signal, the priest standing in the courtyard, the courtyard priest would let the high priest know that the goat had born away the sin of the entire nation for that year, and it would disappear.

Why The Old Testament Sacrificial System?

It's interesting, that these two goats speak of the work of Jesus Christ for us. Why two goats? I'll tell you why. Because somehow in the Old Testament sacrificial system they had to show that the Messiah would die, but also live. And if you kill a goat you can't bring it back to life, can you? So they had to take two goats. One goat would shed its blood, the other one would live on, both would bear the sin. Isn't that neat? Say yes!, because I'm excited. Now all of this is leading up to something. Remember I told you all year long the people were bringing their sacrifices and their sins were being covered. This is what was happening. Let this little table represent sin. Now all year long the sins of Israel as they were being committed, you would offer the lamb, the blood of the lamb would be applied to your life, and your sin would then be covered, kafar, it would be, atonement was made for it. And your sin would be covered, ok, by the blood of that sacrifice. Maybe you sinned again, and again, and again, you keep coming back, and there would be more covering for you. Plenty of covering for your sin. The blood of the lamb would cover, make atonement for your sin. Now that's what was happening in the Old Testament. The blood of bulls, the blood of goats, the offering of heifers and other animals, these all could not take away sins [Hebrews 10:4]. All they could do is **cover** your sin. Now that's nice, because it stalls off God's wrath. God didn't judge you, your sins were covered. But your sin is still there. I'm a little uncomfortable about that, aren't you? And the people were too, and they were longing for the day when God's real lamb would come, and would deal in a different way with our sins. Having them covered is nice, but when you cover something up there's always the chance of it being discovered again, isn't

there? So, this is funny, in our house we worked and scrimped and saved early in our marriage, we ate on a card table for a long time, so that we could pay cash for a new oak dining room set. We bought the table first, then we bought one chair at a time. And some of you can relate to doing things that way. Other's of you can't, you bought now and you're going to pay two years from now when the payments start. But anyway, the table, I'll never forget the first time we got the ding on the table—a big scratch right on the center of the table. No one knew how it got there, you know. And so we had to start using a table cloth. I am convinced, absolutely, that you don't use a table cloth because you like to have a table cloth on your table, because who wants to get it dirty and wash it and iron it again? I mean, who's into that anymore? Table cloths are to cover up the table, right? Right gang? That's why we use table cloths. And so we kept the table cloth on the table, as long as we had the table, and now we've got a different set and it's got a ding too, so it's got a table cloth on it too. And I dinged the table this last time. Well, funny the things you can do. I remember, I'll never forget the time I went to Craig and Cindy Waffle's, they're not here at our church anymore, they did move out of town. And we were going over to their house, and they had light covered carpeting in the house, and it's sort of very well decorated. It was their first home, and they had all these area rugs, all over the house, like an area rug in front of the little cedar chest, and area rug in front of the couch, an area rug right in front of the room. And you know, I was sitting on the floor and laughing and goofing around and said 'What are these area rugs here, are you trying to hide something?' and I lifted one up and there are these big spots on the carpet. 'Oh brother...dum, dee dum, dee dum.' I was so red, man, I was so embarrassed, because they were covering up, every area rug. Then I looked as I walked out of the room, every one of those was covering up a spot. [laughter] They were embarrassed, I was what a stupid thing to do, Mark. I since have learned, I don't look under things at people's houses anymore. If you've got an area rug, don't worry about me, man, I'll sit on it, I'll stand on it, say 'I love your beautiful carpet.' I won't even see the area rugs. Oh man. Well, that's the way this was. I mean there's a possibility, maybe the cover would come off. Your sins are still there [in the Old Testament], until Jesus Christ appeared. Look at John 1, verse 29, would you. **John chapter 1, verse 29, "The next day, he (that's John) saw Jesus coming to him, and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.'"** Oh, wow, John said that. Of course, his Jewish audience immediately knew what he was saying. For one thing, he was saying 'This guy's the Messiah'. Secondly they immediately recognized ***'That's Day of Atonement talk. That's scapegoat talk. That's saying, this guy's the one who's not just going to***

cover my sin, he's going to take away my sin.' See, there's a difference. If they're just covered, they can be uncovered by some nerd, right, who wants to peek and say 'What's under here?' Right? You'll never know when a guy like that will show up at your house [laughter]. But you see, when a spot has been removed, when the sin has been taken away, you have nothing to ever fear again, as long as you live. Amen? The Bible says, look at Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 9, verse 26. Hebrews 9, verse 26. We'll look at the last half of **Hebrews 9 verse 26**, where it starts with **"but now"**. **"...but now once at the consummation of the ages** (and the Day of Atonement represented the end of the age, the consummation of the ages) **he** (Jesus) **has been manifested to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself."** King James Version states: **"but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."** Look at **verse 12 of chapter 10**. **"But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins"** -- for how long? All time -- **"sat down at the right hand of God."** In other words, what he did was once and for all, and complete, and enough, and did the job. So, Jesus didn't come to cover you sin anymore, he came to take your sin away. He bore it away. **"Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."**

What Has God Done With Your Sins?

Now what has God exactly done with your sins? That's what we're going to talk about. What's he done with our sins? Let's look at Psalm 103. You might want to write this down. If you've been on a guilt trip for a long time, you don't know that you really have the forgiveness of God in your heart, today I'm going to give you an opportunity to make sure that you are a forgiven person. You can leave here today, knowing your sins are all forgiven, and that you are right with God. I want you to look at Psalm 103, verse 10. We'll start at verse 10. **Verse 10, Psalm 103**. David starts out, I'll start in the **first verse**, he says **"Bless the Lord O my soul! And all that is within me, bless the Lord O my soul! And all that is within me, bless his Holy name. Bless the Lord O my soul, and forget none of his benefits."** Then he begins to list the benefits to your soul of knowing the Lord. And **verse 10**, he says, that one of the benefits is that God isn't dealing with us the way we deserve to be dealt with. **"He has not dealt with us"** -- *how?* -- **"according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."** Thank

God! But then he goes on now, and he says, **“For as high as the heavens are above the earth”** -- how high is that, gang? It’s an unfathomable distance, isn’t it? -- **“for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his lovingkindness for those who fear him.”** Verse 12, **“As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”** The first thing I want you to know, is what God does to your sins, is he banishes them. Number 1, he banishes them, as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our iniquities from us. Now this just goes to prove to you the absolute inspiration of the Word of God. Because, what do you always, if you’re talking about distance, what do you always say first? You say north and south first, don’t you? North, south, east, west. How many of you would say, east, west, north, south? I mean, you have to really think about that. I mean, it’s like, that doesn’t fit, stop it! It’s like scratching your fingernails down the board, knock it off! East, west, north south, that is weird. So we always say, what? North, south, east and west, and that’s like you got to know that to be alive. And so the Lord is saying here, you know it’s inspired because, they didn’t even know there was a north pole and a south pole in David’s day. They didn’t know that had he said north and south, some day, somebody would have taken a tape-measure and been able to measure from the north to the south, and say *‘Oh my sins are exactly this many thousand miles apart, away from me.’* You could have found them. Right? But instead, he says **“they are as far as the east is from the west.”** That’s pretty incredible, because how far do you have to fly, how many hours would it take you flying east to hit west? How far, how long? How far and how long would we fly, how many hours would we flying west until we hit east? You’d go forever, you’d go round and round and round and around. Wouldn’t you? You’d never find it. Exactly, exactly! God is saying, **“That’s what I’ve done to your sins.”** *‘Oh, but they’re big, Mark.’* So what, God has banished them.

The Second Thing God Has Done With Your Sin

The second thing God has done to your sin. He has barred them from his sight. He bars them from his sight. Isaiah, let’s go to Isaiah 38, verse 17. Isaiah chapter 38, verse 17. Now go to the right from where you were in Psalms to find **Isaiah, 38 verse 17**. I was in a service yesterday and you couldn’t even hear a Bible page

flipping. It's so nice to hear you guys flipping through and got your Bibles there. **"Lo, for my own welfare I had great bitterness" Isaiah the prophet says. "It is thou who kept my soul from the pit of nothingness, for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back."** What is the Lord saying here? **'Guys, I don't want to see your sins.'** **'They're not just covered in front of me, I cast them behind my back because I don't want to look at them anymore.'** You see, God wants to free you from the burden of your sins. God wants to get rid of your sins. You see, that's his heart. He's not out to get you, he wants to help you and save you. And so he bars our sins from his sight. **'Get behind me, sins, I don't want to see you anymore.'** That's what God says to your sins. Keep your finger in Isaiah, and look for Micah. Go to the right to Micah, the book of Micah.

Our Sins Are Dumped Into The Deepest Part Of The Sea

We'll see the third thing that God does with our sins. We'll give you a little extra time to find Micah, because I can't even find Micah right now. The last page of the book of Micah. It's right by Nahum. In-between Jonah and Nahum, if that will help. **Micah 7:19.** He banishes our sins. He bars them from his sight. And now he buries them in the depths of the sea. Incredible. True story. A little sweet old Christian lady was at the doctors, looking for a decent magazine to read. It's hard to find one these days. I was at the doctor's the other day, and all they had in the entire place was Self Magazine. Self. Give me a break, I don't need to read a magazine like that, I've got enough problems with **self**. I don't have to buy a magazine for self. Why don't they have a magazine called *Others?* [laughter] You know, *Others*. Self, with the women on the front of it. This lady, she found something to read. Finally found a National Geographic Magazine and was reading an article about some sea exploration, and all of a sudden, the people around her-- you know doctor's offices, the weirdest places to be anyway, depending on the doctor you're going to. You know, if you've got one of those "private" problems, and you're at one of those "private" doctors, and everyone sort of sits there like, *'hmmm, I'm just here, I really don't have a problem.'* *'I'm here with a friend, I'm consulting for someone right now, and I'm in their place.'* You know how weird it is. But obstetricians are different. Pregnant ladies all sit there, and ahh, you love being there, you talk about the baby. But every

place else I've been at is weird, very weird. And she's at one of those weird doctors. And they're very quiet, aren't they. Doctor's lobbies are very quiet. I mean, it's like a sin to talk in a doctors lobby. And this lady broke out in Christian expletives "*Praise the Lord!!!*" "*Oh haliluya!!!*" And all the people said, "*This lady's lost it, quick!*" And someone went up to the window and said "*This lady over here is having problems.*" She says "*Oh glory!*" and everyone thought '*She's dying.*' The nurses ran out, they took her hand, they said "*Oh dear, what's the matter? You OK?*" Take her pulse...she says "*No, no, calm down everybody. I was just reading this article in the National Geographic Magazine and I read how they were doing exploration in the deepest part of the ocean, and there's these places where the pressure is so great that if something gets down there, it can't ever come up, it gets stuck down there.*" And she says "*Haliluya!*" and she quoted this verse. Let's read it. **"He will again have compassion unto us, he will tread our iniquities under foot, yes thou wilt cast all our sins"--where?--"into the depths of the sea."** And she says "*I get it now! I get it now! They're buried and they can't resurface.*" Amen? The Lord buries our sins in the depths of the sea. It's not like the New York garbage, you know, they dump it, and it washes back onto the beaches, you know. You got your needles and all the other stuff washing up on shore. No way, no one's going to find your sin on the shore some day. It's been buried, never to resurface again. Amen! Now I said keep you hand in Isaiah. Let's go back to Isaiah chapter 43. Our sins have been buried. They've been banished from God's presence. They've been barred from his sight, buried in the depths of the sea.

Our Sins Have Been Blotted Out

And lastly, our sins have been blotted out. Isaiah chapter 43, verse 25. Read it with me. OK? **Isaiah 43, verse 25. "I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember you sins."** [King James version: "**I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.**"] Amen! The King James says "I've blotted out your transgressions." I've wiped them out. They're not on the records. The spot is not on the carpet anymore, it's been removed. There's no evidence against you.' This will have a tremendous impact on your life. The Lord has taken away the guilt of your sin. **"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin**

of the world.” Can you relate to the weight of sin and the burden of sin? We used to backpack, Leslie, I and her family would go backpacking. And you look at her today, and you would never imagine that gal could carry a 40 pound backpack, you know, she’s so petite and so small that you just wouldn’t think she could. But man she was a trooper, I’ll tell you. And I’ll never forget, my first backpacking trip was with her and her family, and I was **seriously** dating her. And I just knew she was the girl I was going to marry someday. And so they invited me to this backpacking trip, and sure, love will do stupid things, won’t it? So they said “OK Mark”, they rented me a backpack, and they put the pack on me, and 65, 70 pounds on my back, and I thought ‘*Oh my goodness, I’m never going to make it.*’ But you know, love and pride will really keep you going, you know. [laughter] She can’t see weakness, you know. And so I was going to hike that three or four miles up that mountain, this mountain where we first held hands, I told you that story...So we got to the top, and I’ll never forget taking that pack off, after three or four hours of hiking, taking that thing off. And I truly — then you just walk a few feet. A lot of you can relate to this, you set it down. And the way they make backpacks, good backpacks, the burden is supposed to become a part of you. It’s not supposed to be something hanging back there so you walk like this, you know. It’s supposed to fit so well that it becomes a part of you, like gaining 70 pounds in one moment, and walking around and carrying the weight. And so when you take it off, it’s become so much a part of you that those first few steps you really think you’ve just lifted off the ground, the relief. Can you relate to that? The women can’t relate to this. OK, I have a way for you sisters to relate to this. This will work. It’s like instead of taking the sixteen month old and three month old shopping with you, you leave ‘em at home and you go by yourself! I mean, we can walk in the door and we can walk in the store, and we can go at our own pace and we’re not—‘Well come back here!’ You can relate, **freedom!** Right? **No kids! Oh, it’s such a feeling of awesomeness.** Can you relate sisters, now? You know what I’m talking about. Freedom. The burden is gone. Incredible, isn’t it? Well, that’s what happens when your guilt is removed by Jesus Christ. The burden of sin is taken off, and I tell you, I can’t get over it. That’s my favorite verse of any hymn in the whole wide world is that third verse we sang of **“It is well with my soul”** The verse that when you first hear it, maybe somebody sung it for the first time this week, and you thought ‘what is the matter with these people, they sing ‘My sin, Oh the joy of this glorious’—you think are they thinking about the old life, oh I remember what I used to do, the glorious life, oh yeah, the parties...’ No that’s not what it means. I remember when I first heard that song and thought ‘*What’s so glorious about the thought of my sins?*’ *I hate my*

sins!' *'I'm burning by my sins.'* And I read the rest. *'My sin, oh the joy of this glorious thought, my sin, not in part, but the whole has been nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, Oh my soul!'* That's my favorite verse of any hymn in the whole world. Because I know what it's like to have the burden of my sin removed. Now some people's Christianity is different from this. Some people try to offer you a gospel where they say *'Oh yes, the Lord has taken away your guilt, taken away your burden.'* And then they put the backpack back on you. *'But now it's up to you.'* We did the weirdest, meanest thing to Leslie, her brother an I, on that trip when we were coming back. She was telling me, the whole trip *'Now it's going to be a lot easier going back, because we've eaten most of the weight.'* You know, we've eaten the food and everything. Now she says, *'Going back down the hill, Mark, it's going to be a lot easier because your pack will be so much lighter.'* I said, *'Oh great.'* So going back she kept complaining how heavy her backpack was. And I said, *'Well Les, you said it would feel lighter.'* She says, *'Yeah, it always has.'* She said, *'But ahh, this feels heavier than when I was walking up here.'* And we said, *'Really?'* And her brother Martin said, *'Really?'* *'Oh come on Les, come on Sis...'* When we got to the bottom of the mountain, and we were unloading our packs she discovered two boulders in the bottom of her pack that we had put in there. Sick humor, I know, but. I did it, because I'd know, twelve, fourteen years later I'd have a sermon where I'd need an illustration. No. Living with me is the pits. All sorts of things happen to you. But anyway. This illustrates a point. Like the caterpillar last week. Can't remember what the sermon was last week, all you remember is the caterpillar, yeah. The thing was, this illustrates the point, some people pull that on you spiritually. There are groups masquerading as Christianity that have pulled that very thing. They lead you to Christ, they say, they talk about forgiveness, they talk about grace, they talk about eternal life. But then they put a burden on you that is actually heavier than you ever had before. That is **not** the gospel. And that is not Christianity. The Bible tells us that Christianity is different from any other religion on earth. I've made a study now over the years of comparing religions, and studying comparative religions. And if I study all the religions of the world, I find that Christianity cannot even be called a religion, because it is **so** different from any other religion that it doesn't even fit in the category of religion. Because every other religion on the whole entire face of the planet could be summarized by one word, their way of salvation could be summarized by one word--**Do. Do, you must do this, do that, lay on a bed of nails, walk on the coals, sit and meditate, eat a certain way, go a certain place, have**

certain ceremonies done for you, add infinitum. It goes on and on and on. Christianity is revolutionarily different. I mean, it's absolutely incomparable because you could also summarize Christianity's basic way of salvation, and it is the word-- ***DONE.*** Done, not do, but done. **Jesus [Yeshua] has done it all for us.** That's the message of Christianity. Jesus has paid the price, he's not just covered your sin. Your sins aren't sitting around in some heavenly storage room, covered up [with some spiritual drop-cloth], they are ***gone***, if you've believed in Christ [Yeshua haMeschiach]. Now I told you, you may have come here today, and it's not by accident. But you've come with a heavy load of guilt on you. There's one way to get rid of your sins, and only one way, believe me. [And Jewish people ought to understand the symbolism here, because before the Temple was destroyed, they came once a year, on the Day of Atonement, and all the sins of Israel, the sins of every individual, were placed on the head of that live goat, and born away, while the blood of the slain goat paid the price for those sins. Yeshua haMeschiach is the one who's shed blood paid the price, and he lives today to bear your sins away, as far as the east is from the west, as a courageous Israelite king once said in Psalms.] Many of us could testify, we tried penance, we tried other religions, we've looked for the hard religions, you know. Sometimes people tell me, 'Well, you know, I need a hard religion, I think that would help me get closer to God.' I tell you, you could never get close to God on your own efforts. It's an unbridgeable gap. You must come on God's bridge, Jesus Christ [Yeshua haMeschiach]. God sent Jesus to bridge the gap between sinful people and himself. The only way that you can be brought to God is through Jesus' death and resurrection, because Jesus died for you. [Just as the sin offering bulls, goats and lambs died to 'cover' the sins of individual Israelites before Messiah came--they pointed to Yeshua haMeschiach.] He died for your sin. You can come--but if you say, *'I've sinned too many times, or I was caught in the act.'* Well, there was a woman recorded in John 8 who was caught in the very act of adultery, and she was thrown down at Jesus' feet. The religious people of the day said, ***'You say you're so loving, what are you going to do with her?'*** ***'Moses says that a woman who commits adultery, or anyone who commits adultery should be'*** — what? ***'Stoned, killed.'*** The penalty was death. ***'You say you're so loving, what are you going to do with her?!'*** And they knew, ***'We got him now, if he says we'll stone her, we'll say 'You're not loving.'*** If he says she can go free, we'll say, ***'You don't believe in God's Holiness.'*** They thought they really had him stuck now. And then the Lord does the most interesting thing, he just bends down and begins to write [in the dirt]. We're not told what he wrote, but my sanctified imagination

likes to think that he wrote--it says that beginning from the oldest to the youngest, they saw him writing, and began to leave, beginning with the oldest to the youngest. In my heart, I think what he was doing was, he wrote, maybe the guy's name was Zecharias, Zechariah, and then he wrote the name 'Oh, Hannah.' [laughter] And a date, and another date. Simon, and then an amount that he ripped off from somebody else. And I believe he began with listing their sins. That's just my own thought. I could be wrong. But I'll tell you what I'm not wrong about. When they all left, it was just Jesus, and that woman caught in the very act of adultery, red in the face with embarrassment, and Jesus said to her, **'Dear lady, where are those who condemn you?'** She says, **'They've disappeared, Lord.'** And I'm sure she was looking at him like, *'you could condemn me.'* Jesus said, **'Neither do I condemn you. Go, and sin no more.'** Now at that moment, her sin was covered. But on the cross Jesus hung and died for a sin of adultery. Her sin was covered, but at the cross it was taken away. You see, there's no reason for you to be punishing yourself for the wrong things you've done, because Jesus isn't just covering up what you've done, he has satisfied the penalty of the sin that you've committed, himself taking the punishment for you, and then he's taken your sin away--and it is gone. It's vanished. Do you need this kind of forgiveness? Have you received this kind of forgiveness. The Bible says that you can have it, if you'll ask for it. You must first of all give your life to Jesus Christ, you must believe in Jesus [Yeshua]. If you believe in Jesus, he will forgive your sins, and you will be saved.

How To Become A Christian

I want to give you that opportunity now, in just a minute. I don't believe it's just coincidence that you walked in the door, and we just happened to be talking about what God does with your sins. I think you needed to hear that there's relief for your sin, that there's a way that God fairly dealt with your sins, and they are gone forever and you can have peace with God. If you want the gift of eternal life, if you want to have your guilt relieved, you're sick of walking around--maybe it's something you did 20 years ago, or maybe it's something you did last night. But if you want to have your sins forgiven, and you want to have your guilt washed away, and you want to know for sure that if you died, you would go to heaven [or be ushered into the

kingdom of heaven]--if you died on the way home from here, you'd go right to heaven, you can know that, if you will ask Jesus to come into your life. The Bible says, whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. It says we are to believe in our hearts that Jesus died and rose again, and then we're to confess with our mouth that belief in Jesus [Yeshua for our Jewish readers] and we will be saved. 'How do I do it, Mark?' The way you do it is by praying. 'I don't know how to pray.' Hey, it's just talking to God like you talk to a friend. And I'll help you pray now, in just a second we're going to pray. And if you want to ask Jesus into your life, if you want to ask Jesus to forgive your sin, to take your sins away--not just cover them, but **taken 'em away Lord!**--then you pray this prayer with me, and when you're done, it's done. You're right with God, you're saved. You're on your way to heaven [or into the kingdom of heaven as a future immortal son of God, cf. 1 Cor. 15:49-56], you're a new person. If you're sincere, and you want this with all your heart, then I want you to pray with me. Let's bow our heads right now. Those of you who have already received the gift of God's forgiveness, and your sins have been taken away, you now pray for those around you. Let's pray. "Lord, I pray right now that by your Spirit's power you would draw to yourself those that you're calling today. That lives would be transformed by the power of your Spirit, in Jesus name." Now if you want to pray, I want you to pray right now with me. You don't have to pray real loudly, but you need to pray loud enough so that you know what you're saying. You're serious with God. Jesus [Yeshua] is going to accept you right now. Pray with me right now. **"Lord Jesus, I accept you as my Saviour, I want you please to forgive my sins. Banish my sins, Lord. Please bar them from your sight. Bury them, Lord, in the depths of the sea. Please blot them out. I believe you died for me Jesus, I believe that you rose again from the dead for me. Please be my Saviour, I give my life to you, in Jesus name I pray, Amen."** If you just prayed that prayer, keep your heads bowed, your eyes closed. If you prayed that prayer, I want you to know, that God's Spirit has come into your life. You are now a new creature. Jesus has covered you with his perfection. Welcome to God's family. I also want you to know that you have an enemy. His name is Satan. He's trying to do everything he possibly can to keep you from this time. But he lost. He's going to try to fight you now, try to discourage you. And I want to pray for you, a special prayer that God would strengthen you and protect you. The Bible says now, "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." If you prayed this prayer and you asked Jesus into life, I want to pray for you now. I want to ask God's special blessing on you, to help you grow as a new Christian. If you just now asked Jesus to take your guilt away, I'm going to ask you to do something **bold**. OK? I'm not

going to ask you to stand up, or come up here, but wherever you are right now, so I can see you and pray for you, I want you to raise your hand. Go ahead, wherever you are...Let's pray. "Lord, you've seen these three precious people that have raised their hands, asking for this gift now. They understand, maybe for the first time what it means to be forgiven, and have their guilt taken away. Now protect them, help them to grow as new Christians, to grow strong in their Christian life. Protect them from the enemy of their soul, Lord. And we're thankful that you've promised that if you began a work in them, you will complete that work. Bless their lives, Lord, in Jesus name we pray." And everybody said, Amen" [This is a sermon transcript of Pastor J. Mark Martin of Calvary Community Church, P.O. Box 39607, Phoenix, AZ 85069, by permission]