

Isaiah 43:25: “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.”

A young man was sitting in the county jail. He was heavily burdened over the crime he had committed, and he was waiting for his day in court. A jailer, with the name tag “S. Atan” opened the cell, put handcuffs on him, and led him to the court room. The young man, with his head down in shame, slowly followed S. Atan until he was seated at the defendant’s table next to his court-appointed attorney. The judge entered the court room, all stood up, he slammed the gavel down declaring court was in session and asked for the first case.

The court-appointed attorney stood up, introduced herself, and she began her defense of the young man. The man reached up and touched her arm. She stopped talking, looked at him, and he said, “Thank you for your efforts, but please stop.” The young man stood up with tears in his eyes and said to the judge, “Your honor, while I appreciate my attorney’s efforts to defend me, I don’t want to waste the court’s time. I plead guilty.”

The judge was moved by the man’s honest confession, and he said to the young man, “Thank you for your confession, but your crime requires a financial penalty. The fine is \$100,000, or you will have to spend the next five years in jail.” The man couldn’t see the smirk on the jailer S. Atan’s face when he heard the judgment.

The young man, still with tears in his eyes, said to the judge, “Your honor, I don’t have that kind of money.” The judge looked at the man with compassion and told him, “I didn’t think you would.” At that moment, the judge stood up, took off his robe, stepped down from his podium, and approached the bailman. He pulled out a check book, and he wrote a check for \$100,000. He stepped back up to his podium, put his robe back on, and announced to the entire courtroom, “Young man, I’ve paid your penalty. You are free to go.”

The smirk on the jailer S. Atan’s face immediately changed into frustrated anger. The judge ordered the jailer to take off the man’s handcuffs, and he reluctantly obeyed the order. The judge announced that the court was adjourned. The court-appointed attorney said to the man, “I’ve never seen that before. Someone must be watching over you.”

Still stunned at what just happened, the young man went to the judge’s chambers. He knocked on the door, and he heard the judge welcome him in. He looked at the

judge, again with tears in his eyes, and said, “Why would you do that your honor? You heard my confession, right?”

“Yes, I did, and it meant a lot to me that you owned your crime. I was talking to my father about this case, and he knows all about you. He knows your history and the tough times you’ve had in your life. He has great compassion and affection for you, so he asked me to do this. I love my father very much, and I’m in agreement with how he feels about you. I was happy to pay the cost for your crime.”

The man was overwhelmed and said to the judge, “I’m not sure I know what to do next, your honor. I’m still feeling the effect of my confession.”

The judge looked at him with a forgiving look in his eyes and said, “Son, I’m the only judge in these parts. As long as you remain in Grace County, you can live here as if I remember your crime no more. Oh, and by the way, I noticed your name, “I.M. Guilty.” I’ve pre-signed a name change form that you need to sign to formally change your name as a result of my paying the cost for your crime.”

The young man looked down at his new name the judge had given him, and it was “I.M. Innocent.” The man began to tear up again when he looked over at the judge’s signature line. It said Jesus Christ.