

SIGNS & BLUNDERS



ALL RISE!

All rise! The honorable and sovereign Judge El Shaddai presiding.” Everyone in the packed courtroom rose to their feet. The mood was solemn, the air thick. This case would be a landmark decision and had direct implications for the other half million teen-agers living in the city. That’s why media coverage had been so intense. After hearing the evidence, the Judge would decide the case.

As was customary, the prosecutor presented his case first. He would prove that Brandon Green was guilty of crimes worthy of death, for the wage of sin, as the law states, is death. No one took his job as seriously as the prosecutor did. People all over the city knew his reputation and feared him because of it. They knew he could present a case so airtight that a great detective or even the

FBI couldn’t crack it even if they had a signed confession and a smoking gun. He played dirty and so did his henchmen. They had unscrupulous ways of gathering evidence. It’s even been said that he’s had witnesses killed.

“I’d like to call my first witness, Your Honor.” The Judge nodded. “Will Mr. Melvin Duncan come to the witness stand?” Mr. Duncan approached the stand and took a seat placing his hand on the Bible.

“Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” the bailiff asked.

He looked up at the Judge, then responded, “I do.”

By the look on his face, Mr. De’Saton, the prosecutor, had something up his sleeve. “Mr. Duncan, are you Brandon Green’s, the defendant’s, math teacher?”

“Yes, I am.” Mr. Duncan could hardly get the words out before De’Saton started in on the next question.

“... And on Monday, May 24, the day of the final exam, did he or did he not have the answers to the test taped on the bottom of his shoe? Was he or was he not sharing answers with one of his classmates? Did you or did you not confront him during the exam and expel him from class?”

Mr. Duncan answered sheepishly, knowing he was adding to Brandon’s conviction. “Well, uh, yes, I’d say that.”

“Thank you, Mr. Duncan, you can step down.” De’Saton turned his back to the witness and faced the Judge. “I’d like to call my second witness, Your Honor.” The Judge nodded again.

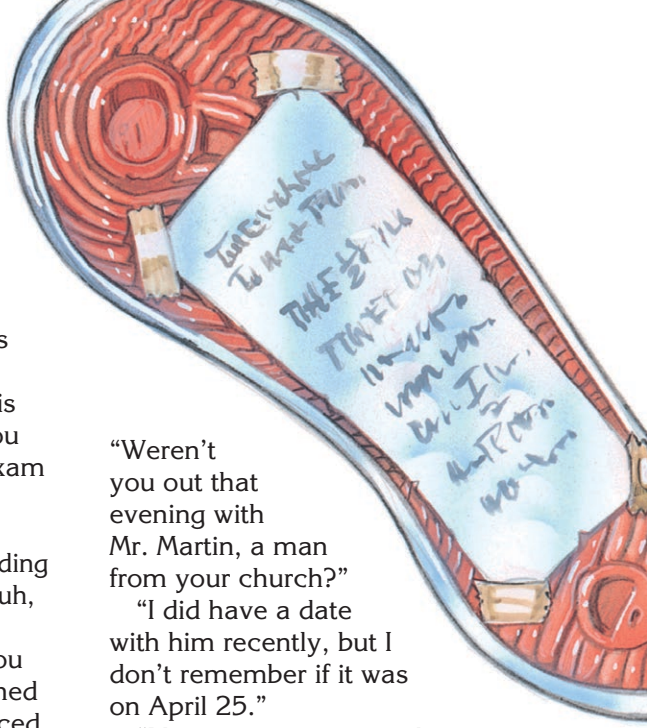
“Will Mrs. Green please approach the stand.”

Mrs. Green hesitantly started for the witness box. She looked her son in the eyes as she passed him. She stood with her hand on the Bible. “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?”

“She looked up at the Judge and said, ‘I do, so help me God.’”

De’Saton started in on her immediately. “So, Mrs. Green, hmmm!” Trying to intimidate her and throw her off emotionally, he put her on the defensive by asking, “Where were you on the evening of April 25?”

“Sir, I uh, don’t uh . . . I don’t remember, sir.”



“Weren’t you out that evening with Mr. Martin, a man from your church?”

“I did have a date with him recently, but I don’t remember if it was on April 25.”

“I have two witnesses that say you were with him that night—quite late into the night as a matter of fact. Isn’t Mr. Martin a married man, Mrs. Green?”

“No, he’s . . .” De’Saton wouldn’t let her finish. He continued his line of questioning.

“When you got home, Mrs. Green,” he raised his voice, “didn’t you find Brandon in his room smoking marijuana, beer cans in the trash, and didn’t you two have a big fight, big enough for the neighbors to call the police?”

“Mighty Counselor, do something,” Brandon said to his attorney in a loud whisper, scooting to the edge of his seat. “He’s trying to destroy my mother’s reputation. What he’s saying isn’t true, well, not all of it. He can’t try her for what I’ve done.” Mighty Counselor didn’t

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PETER knew Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. He'd said so already (see Matthew 16:16). But apparently he didn't really understand all he'd said. There's a big difference between saying and seeing. Jesus took His closest disciples up the mountain to let them see something that would change their lives forever.

Read about their mountain view in Matthew 17:1-12. Also read 2 Peter 1:16-18.

- 1. Read Matthew 17:1-8.** Look at verses 3 and 4 again. Draw a picture of what Peter wanted to do.
- 2.** Change your picture to show what God thought of Peter's plan.
- 3.** Write in the clouds what the disciples heard and underline the words you think were emphasized.
- 4.** Who is Jesus?
- 5. Read Matthew 17:9-12.** Why do you think Jesus told His disciples not to tell anybody what they had seen?

Years later, Peter looked back and wrote about his experience.
Read 2 Peter 1:16-18.

- 6.** Why do you think Jesus let the disciples see Him in His glory?
- 7.** What did Peter learn from this experience?

Illustration: Rex Bohn

THE MOUNTAIN VIEW



Bible Study

Today's Scripture

Matthew 17:1-12

¹After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. ³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus.

⁴Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell facedown to the ground, terrified. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be afraid." ⁸When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

¹⁰The disciples asked him, "Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

¹¹Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. ¹²But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."

2 Peter 1:16-18

¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

¹⁸We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

respond. He just continued writing on his legal pad.

Brandon was worried, frustrated, and angry. *What have I done? I'm putting my mother through all this and destroying my own life. Dear God, help me. If only I'd thought about the consequences. If a miracle doesn't happen, I'll be paying the consequences all right—the death penalty.*

De'Saton paraded in witness after witness, building an airtight case against Brandon. Illegal drugs, rebellion, cheating, stealing, and lying were but a few of his crimes. De'Saton all but had Brandon's soul signed, sealed, and delivered.

"Your Honor, I rest my case," De'Saton said, sneering with arrogance.

It was the defense's turn to present its case. Brandon knew for sure his goose was cooked. That anxious look returned to his face. *If I could do it all over again, things would really be different. I would obey my mother and do all the right things.*

"Your Honor, may we approach the bench?" Mighty Counselor was too calm and it frightened Brandon. Apparently he knew something no one else did. Or was Brandon on his way to the slaughter? Counselor and De'Saton talked in private with the Judge. Then after a few minutes they returned to their respective tables. De'Saton was so furious his eyes turned red and smoke came out of his ears. Mighty

Counselor had a look of peace and assurance on his face as he sat down. That was a good sign.

The Judge hammered his gavel on the pallet to gather everyone's attention. "After conferring with counsel for the defense and the prosecution," he said in a deep resonant voice, "it has been determined that all charges against Brandon Paul Green will be dropped." He hit his gavel down once more, dismissed the court, and departed the courtroom.

The crowd couldn't believe it. They started murmuring, then mobbed the defense table shoving microphones and tape recorders into Counselor's face—but he and Brandon pushed their way through the crowd and found a quiet office in which to talk.

"Counselor, what happened? How did you get me off? Did you pay off the Judge? Did you have the goods on De'Saton? How on earth did you do it?"

"Brandon, not too many people know this about me or are willing to trust me to be their defense attorney. They'd rather take the job themselves. But yes, you're right, I do have something to share with you."

"I knew something was going on," Brandon said confidently, almost to himself.

"I told the Judge that the penalty for your crimes had already been paid by someone who was innocent and free from all crimes of the heart."

"Wow! And he believed you?"

"Yes, he did. The Judge trusts me. He's my Father."

“Redeem” means to buy back or repurchase. You were purchased or “redeemed” from the bondage of sin and death with a price—the blood of Jesus. When Christ died on Calvary, God transferred your sins and guilt to Jesus. So to find redemption, you only need to accept Christ as your Savior, and Jesus’ righteousness will be transferred to you. Look up the following verses that explain redemption in a New International Version of the Bible and fill in the blanks. (You can break up into teams to finish faster.)

CAN YOU FIND REDEMPTION?



Romans 5:8

But _____ demonstrates his own _____ for us in this; While we were still _____, Christ died for us.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the _____ creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Galatians 4:5

To _____ those under the _____, that we might receive _____ to sonship.

Ephesians 1:7

In him we have redemption through his _____, the forgiveness of _____, in accordance with the riches of God’s _____.

1 Peter 1:18

For you know that it was not with _____ things such as _____ or _____ that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors.

ANSWERS Rom. 5:8 God, love, sinners; 2 Cor. 5:17 new; Gal. 4:5 redeem, law, adoption; Eph. 1:7 blood, sins, grace; 1 Pet. 1:18 perishable, silver, gold

every day devos

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

—John 14:6

You can read about God, hear about God, and talk about God, but never really know Him personally. The truth is that the only way to know God is through faith in Jesus Christ.

THE WAY



MONDAY Read John 14:6. Make a one-way sign and print the name "Jesus" on it. Post the sign in your room or locker as a reminder that Jesus is the one and only way to God and heaven. Have you trusted Jesus as the way to God?

TUESDAY Read John 6:35; 8:12; 10:14; 11:25; 14:6; and 15:1. Either draw or cut out pictures to illustrate these "I am" claims of Jesus. Use some of these descriptions in a prayer. For example, "Thank You, Lord, for being the light of the world and showing me how to live for You."

WEDNESDAY Create a rebus (a sentence with words, pictures, and symbols) for John 14:6. Come up with symbols or word pictures for the words "way," "truth," and "life." Use your rebus to help you memorize this verse.

THURSDAY Jesus' gift to us is life, eternal life. Write a short description of how someone can receive Jesus' gift. If you don't know what to write, talk to a Christian friend or adult who can help you.

FRIDAY Read John 14:9-10. Close your eyes and imagine what it would be like to sit down and talk with Jesus face-to-face. What questions would you ask Him? When you pray today, remember that Jesus is with you, so ask Him those questions!

SATURDAY Read John 14:6 again. Jesus is the *only* way to God, but some people say there are other ways to God. Write down one of these wrong ways. Can you explain why Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life?