

# Prison Epistles

## From Satan's Bondage to God's Free Man

Growing up we did not have much but my mom allowed us to ride on the "Joy Bus" to go to church. We would sing our hearts out as we drove around to pick up other kids so I had a child's inkling of Christ.

As I grew to my teens something happened to me and I blamed God for letting it happen. I thus found fault with God. I was really under attack by Satan because I was not praying or leading a life where I allowed God to use me for His purpose to lead others to Him. I ran the streets and started using so at a very young age I was stealing and dealing in everything I could.

Since we did not have much growing up, I took to Satan's power of having things and I remained in this bondage

until I was 35 years old. I am now 42. I was in jail and lost my family. I loved my wife (she was a wonderful wife) and my children, but I lost them all because of my bondage to Satan! I am thankful now that my wife left me for her sake and the children's because I was not a good person. I feel them in my heart and miss them everyday of my life.

I was back in prison time and time again. To this day I cannot tell you how many times I went back. I got free on paper on October 6, 2006 and within a week I was back in jail again. I made bond a month later and committed

numerous more felonies within 90 days.



While in jail this time, a man named Willie and his wife lead me to Jesus Christ. They spent their days bringing the word of the Lord to people like

me. We prayed and finally I gave up and allowed the Lord Jesus Christ into my heart!

I remember standing before the judge with tears running down my face and talking with the Lord. I felt Him in my life and I prayed, "Lord, my life is yours. Do what you want with me." I received

two life sentences and 110 years. I let God have my life and I left the gang I was in.

I've spent 16 years in Ad. Seg. (solitary confinement). I am still in prison but I am freer than I have ever been. I go to school, church and do studies and am taking this time to let the Lord build me. I want the people that i associate with now to be Christ oriented because I need to grow. I'm not fooling myself regarding how weak I am, but by realizing that it helps to make me stronger and closer to God.

**K.S., Texas**

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1. What is light as a feather but even the strongest man cannot hold it more than a few minutes?
2. Before Mount Everest was discovered, what was the highest mountain in the world?
3. A hunter pitched his tent and then hiked south for 5 miles. He turned east and hiked another 5 miles and finally he turned straight north and after hiking 5 miles found a bear tearing his tent apart. What color was the bear?
4. How far can a man with one leg hike into the woods?
5. Why is it against the law for a man living in North Carolina to be buried in South Carolina?
6. You are driving a bus. Four people get on and three get off, then eight people get on and ten people get off, then six people get on and 2 more people get off. What color are the bus driver's eyes?
7. A man left home running. He ran a ways and then turned left, ran the same distance and turned left again, ran the same distance and turned left again. When he got home there were

**DO YOU HAVE A  
PERSONAL  
TESTIMONY FOR  
JESUS CHRIST,  
HOW HE SAVED YOU  
FROM THE GUILT  
AND PENALTY OF  
YOUR SINS AND  
GAVE YOU  
A NEW LIFE?**

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two masked men there. Who were they?

# **NEVER** ***give up!*** **Almighty God** **IS there for YOU**

My name is Donna although most people call me "Sissy." I am 52 years old. I grew up in North Carolina. I can remember good times there playing with my cousins on the whirlybird in my Aunt's back yard. I remember the fruit trees in my neighbor's back yard covered with green apples.

I never realized then that our family was so dysfunctional. My Dad was the center of my life. He taught me to garden and to wash dishes when I was so young I had to stand on a chair to reach the sink. Life seemed so good then. I didn't realize that life was good because my Mom kept disappearing from our lives.

There were five of us; myself, my three sisters and our brother, Rocky. Periodically my Mom would reappear and life would get hectic. I was not yet in the second grade when she kidnapped us from school. It was a cold day and her car broke down so we all ended up hitchhiking. We were left with strangers in Alabama. Then she reappeared again and took us to

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Chicago. It turned out that she was a stripper. Fame and her name in the spotlights of Chicago was all she cared about and she got that. While we were in Chicago we got saved. It was here that we learned a little about the Lord Jesus Christ.

I became "mom" to the rest of the kids even though I was the middle child. I lost my own childhood young as I tried to care for them. Then we came to Texas and once again Mom disappeared. Now it was me and the rest of the kids along with my stepdad. Life was strange. We ended up on the north side of Houston. I remember pulling my brother and sister around in a little red wagon. I would put them in people's attics at night to keep them safe. I would stay on the bayou in the underbrush since I was too tall to get into the attics. Whenever I see the poster of the Guardian Angel, I see myself and my sisters and brother because we played at a bridge that looks much like the one on those posters.

We stayed in a series of foster homes and youth homes. At the age of 15 I became a runaway. I got pregnant and had a son when I was barely 16. I had to allow my son to be adopted because his father had killed a man and was on his way to prison. That loss was so devastating to me that I turned to drugs. I witnessed so much pain and suffering that I have stayed single most of my life.

This is my third trip to prison and *I have found God again!!* I know that He has plans for my life. I'm not bitter anymore and feel I'll be able to see the path He wants me to go down. A wonderful man has entered into my life and I share his testimony as I reach out to other young women.

I pray others open their hearts and minds and follow the Lord and won't return here. I had slipped and fallen back into the drugs. I prayed to God to pull me back out so that I would not spend the rest of my life in prison. I came to jail one week later and took a 5 year sentence when I had been facing life. God does answer prayers. I am using this time to regroup. I hope others look at prison as a place to be still and let God's word work in their lives.

"Sissy," Dayton, TX

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## Do You Hear the KNOCKING?

The grace of God has delivered me from drugs, alcohol, gangs, tobacco and even gambling. It was something that God had been trying to do for many, many years but, as in the case of the apostle Paul, I kept kicking against the pricks. Instead I let the lusts and the desires of the flesh take control of my life, which almost destroyed me. God had been knocking on the door of my heart wanting to come in and sup with me but for many years I would not allow Him. I loved my sin too much. Finally, I surrendered to him one glorious day and my life has not been the same since.

I grew up in a dysfunctional household. I was allowed to take drinks of my parent's beer and wine at the young age of ten. That was the first time I got drunk. At the age of twelve I smoked my first marijuana joint which led to the use of other drugs and eventually to my dependence on them.

I was in junior high when I joined my first gang and my life of crime began. Two months before I turned 18 I was sentenced to prison for stealing a car. While I was in prison I joined the most powerful prison gang at the time. I was paroled only to commit another crime and this time I was sentenced to 20 years in prison. From that point on I just kept digging myself deeper and

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## RIDDLE ANSWERS

1. Your breath
2. Mount Everest
3. White because it had to be a polar bear at the North Pole, otherwise he would have been 5 miles away from his tent.
4. Half way, after that he is hiking out of the woods.
5. If he is living he should not be buried!
6. YOU are driving the bus!
7. A baseball catcher and the umpire.

deeper into a hole. I remember the warden telling me that something deep inside of me was tired of what I was doing but I just did not know how to let go. I was so full of anger and hatred on the inside that I would lash out at anybody who crossed me, including the prison guards. This behavior led me to catch another 20 year sentence, 4 more years and later another 30 year sentence. Finally I was classified as a habitual offender and was given a life sentence. But none of this made me realize the harm I was causing myself. I would do things without thinking about the consequences that would follow.

Many times I put my life on the line for the gang, whom I considered my family. I picked up more time and committed crime after crime for the gang only to be betrayed by them in the end. My involvement with the gang caused me to be put in Administrative Segregation, where I would spend 25 years of my life. I was locked up in a cell by myself 22 hours, sometimes 24 hours, a day away from population.

It is only by the grace of God that I did not go crazy while I was there. I saw many men lose their minds. Some would walk around like zombies, they had to be medicated for them to be able to deal with Administrative Segregation. Some others could not take it and would take their own lives. Somehow I managed to make it through.

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While I was in the gang, because of my loyalty to them, I climbed up in the ranks to Lieutenant and then to Chairman. As time went by, problems developed within the gang, differences in ideology and the direction certain members wanted the gang to go. This caused a split to occur in the gang. In 1992 I, with the help of another man named Paul, decided to form another gang. He became the president and I was named vice president. In 1998 Paul was set up by his girlfriend and was gunned down at a party. I took his position and became the president of the gang. For the next 11 years it was a psychological war to try to stay above the surface. I had many members under my command and I was responsible for the welfare of every single one. They were my family. I was deep in sin, deceived by the lies of the devil. It was not until 2009 when changes began taking place in my life. We were having problems with another gang and it was my decision whether we went to war with them or not. If we did, many would die, some others would get sentences stacked on top of the sentences they already had. Something or someone put it in my heart not to go to war. Something softened my heart and I began to see all the members of my gang as people. They were people who had families out there who needed them more than I needed them in here. I just could not let them go down like that. Just because I was doing a life sentence it did not give me the right to take away their freedom and the chance to be with their families again. I had never thought like that before, something was changing in

me. I made the decision not to go to war and it made me happy. Now I know who influenced me to make that decision—God. He had begun working in me, molding me into the person He wanted me to be. That same year I made the decision to leave the gang. God gave me the courage to leave behind the people whom I had considered my true family for so many years.

I signed up for GRAD which stands for Gang Renunciation and Disassociation. This program enables a member to renounce his gang affiliation. I was put through classes like anger management, cognitive intervention etc. for nine months and was gradually released into general population. But I was still spiritually lost. While I was in Administrative Segregation ministers would go in there and witness to us, but I was not interested in Jesus. I always believed that there was a God. There had to be one but I did not know Him. I'd heard about Jesus, but I did not know Him. Once I was released into General population I began going to church. The spirit of God would convict me every time I heard the gospel.

Finally, on July 3, 2012 I surrendered my life to God. His grace reached down and saved me. My life has not been the same since then. All the hatred, anger and addictions that I had vanished. The Lord took all that away from me. Whom the Lord has set free is free indeed. I am a completely different person thanks to Jesus. It took me almost 28 years in prison and many heartaches to finally be set free. I have a life sen-

tence. I am up for parole for the 12<sup>th</sup> time in May 2015. If I am granted parole I still have 14 years federal time that I have to serve. I do not worry about it though; it is all in the Lords hands. Right now, all I'm worried about is finding my purpose in life. I want to know what God's will is for my life. I want to serve him for the rest of my life and to tell others what he has done in my life. I will forever be thankful to God for having mercy on this wicked sinner. I thank Him for not letting me die while I was still lost, for giving me another chance and for giving me eternal life!

By the grace of God,  
F.Y., Texas

**How would you like to**

**KNOW**

**ALL YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN!**

**YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE!**

**YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY TO HEAVEN!**

**YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD!**

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***"How to be  
BORN AGAIN"***

**and**

***"EVIDENCE  
of Salvation"***

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**Coming regularly to this newsletter is an advice column of sorts from the perspective of an old convict who has spent 40 years of his life in prison. The primary audience of this newsletter is those in prison, but walls, fences, and cells are not the only "prisons" of this world. At this time I am asking for questions, suggestions, and/or comments relating to prison or life in general. So, stay tuned!**

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**good and acceptable and perfect." (Rom. 12:1-2, NASB)**

Countless sermons have been based on these two verses and entire books could be written on this subject, but for today let's take a look at just two points made here.

The first point is that we are urged to present our bodies as "living and holy sacrifices." Under the Law, Israel presented "clean" animals as sacrifices to our Lord God. These animals were first killed and then offered. Here we are told to present ourselves as "living and holy sacrifices." In short—our lives. In other words this is how we are to live our lives and this is how we can worship God.

**"Old School"**

## **OUR MINDS**

It is in our minds that everything we see, everything we hear, smell, taste or touch is processed. It is in our minds that we decide all of the voluntary and involuntary actions our bodies carry out. It is in our minds where we decide if and when we read our Bibles and where we process what we read. It is in our minds where we decide when, and if, to pray and about what or whom to pray for. It is in our minds where we decide who or what to believe.

**"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is**

The second point is three-fold. It involves two actions and the result of these two actions. First, we are told: *"And do not be conformed to this world."* Simply put, we are to no longer act as we did when we were without God, without Jesus, without His Holy Spirit in this world.

Chances are that most, if not all, of you reading this also read your Bible and pray and sometimes when you are reading God's word or praying, your mind seems to have a mind of its own and, before you know it, your mind has drifted off to everywhere else except what you were reading or praying about. This happens to all of us—to some more than to others, but all of us go through this. The same also happens whenever we read anything else or when we are trying to think about something specific. And if you

care to admit it, sometimes this also happens while you are supposed to be “listening” to others talking to you.



This is where the second action of this point comes in. It is very possible to learn to have more control over our minds. We are told to be *“transformed by the renewing of our minds.”*

The Greek word “metamorphoo” that is here translated as transformed is found only four times in our Bible. Twice this word is translated as “transfigured,” as in our Lord’s “transfiguration” on the mount (see Matt. 17:2 and Mark 9:2)

According to Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (11<sup>th</sup> Ed.), the word transfigure means: “to give a new and typically exalted or spiritual appearance to: transform outwardly and usually for the better.”

Matthew and Mark describe eyewitness accounts of a very dramatic and supernatural transformation of Jesus on the mount—to say the least!

The NASB translates this same word as “transformed” in II Cor. 3:18, just as in Rom. 12:2. In the English language we get the word “metamorphosis” from the very same Greek word. Metamorphosis involves a dramatic change both in form and substance.

The best example of metamorphosis is the butterfly. This beautiful creature begins as a larva—a caterpillar—then it builds a cocoon around itself and some days later a butterfly comes out of that

same cocoon. In a few weeks this creature goes from being a caterpillar crawling on the ground and on plants on its belly to a winged insect flying through the air—a brand new creature! (See II Cor. 5:17).

God is telling us that when we stop acting like we used to do and when we become transformed by the renewing of our minds, we will then be able to see and live the result of these two actions. We will then *“...prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”* We will then be able to live our lives as *“living sacrifices,”* worshipping God in all we do by deed or thought.

When we are born again, born from above, we are indwelt by God (I John 4:13, 15-16), in Christ Jesus (Gal. 2:20) through His Holy Spirit (I Cor. 3:16). Therefore, spiritually we are perfect, but our minds are not. That is why we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and then our minds will align with His Spirit.

*“Old School”*

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# PRISON



view some things that are wrong worse than others, but wrong is wrong, sin is sin in the eyes of the Lord.

When you hear the word "Prison" it never sounds good does it? My prison came long before the steel bars and cold concrete surrounded me. Mine was the stronghold of the mind, body and spirit...things that could not be seen. On my own I could not shake them off and even after I surrendered my will to the Lord Jesus Christ, I was still wrestling with things I did not know were at work inside me...things I had not yet given up.

If you have been "born again" by faith in Jesus Christ and are truthful with yourself, you can likely relate to what I am saying. You find yourself asking, "Why am I still doing this?" or "Why is this happening? This shouldn't be me any longer!"

Prison...no matter if it's a physical one or a mental one, is designed to contain you, depress you and suppress you. But God tells us *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"* (Romans 12:21).

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls...it is not God's intended will that mankind be locked up. However, because we are such fallible creatures and trouble does lie within our flesh, we will thus have many problems that require correcting. We think wrong...we say wrong...we all do wrong, maybe not just the same as the next person, but wrong nevertheless. With man's eyesight we

From where I sit in this old prison cell for the crimes I committed, I can't help but see what prison can do to a person. It can destroy me as a person, strip my dignity and turn me into an animal or a monster. This place breaths negativity. However, *"...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2Corinthians 5:17). So I can't, I just can't allow what man may say about me or what he may do to me or the pressures of my negative environment or the troubles of my past negate my tomorrow.

We Christians are instructed by our Savior to *"walk by faith not by sight"* (2Corinthians 5:7). Almighty God has promised us that all those who really surrender to and believe in Jesus Christ as the One who paid the full penalty for our sins will, one day, have the full measure of eternal life with Him, *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God"* (1John 5:13). Therefore, we are instructed to *"...hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful"* (Hebrews 10:23).

A friend of mine always used to write this to me, *"All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on*

*Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6). To you who are reading this, know that "As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one'" (Romans 3:10).*

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*put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). It is God's pure love that instructs and thus encourages us.*

Since being in prison I have found great solace through the uncompromised word of God. The Bible is a book filled with stories, examples and instructions of what to do and what not to do. There are stories of cultures, nations and some people who have been imprisoned just like today. Reading the word of God and embracing its contents was, and is, my key to freedom and it can be yours too...yes, yours! I may never leave this physical prison again...the Lord knows...however, if I don't, I'm OK because I am free inside of me. And, just like me, you also need freedom.

The word of God is also a love book. It is a love book for those who have been loveless for much too, too long. Jesus Christ said, *"As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love" (John 15:9)*. That is amazing love! And the following promise is an example of His amazing love... *"When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:4)*. He goes on in the context of John 15 to tell us how to dwell in the joy and comfort of His love... *"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full (John 15:10-11)*. And here are some of His commands that work for our benefit... *"Therefore*

To you who may read this but have never been in a physical prison, nor have thought much about those of us who are (and you probably have thought, "Their getting what they deserve"), I ask you not to be such a quick judge. Prison is not always just a concrete building with bars. Look in the mirror and ask God and yourself if you are perhaps in a different kind of prison for which only the Lord Jesus Christ is the key.

If you are a son or daughter who never got much from your deadbeat dad or mom who wasn't there for you...you may not know what kind of a prison he or she was in even as they walked the streets. Those of you wives or husbands who were treated terribly by a spouse or betrayed and cheated by a friend...think now about the prison they were in as they tried to find meaning for life without the only giver of life, Jesus Christ! Don't allow yourself to be imprisoned by hate or vengeance toward them.

The Lord Jesus Christ went to that awful cross to pay the penalty not only for those who have sinned against you but for you too. Christ is waiting to set you free from your pain! He is just a prayer away... *"For whoever calls on the name*

*of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13)!*

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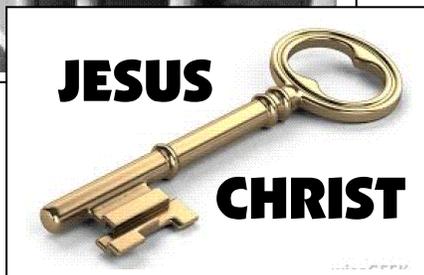
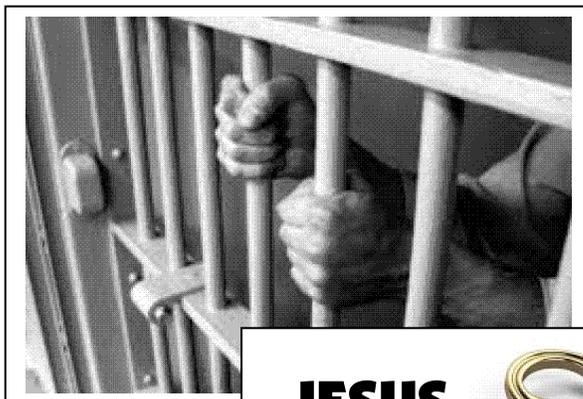
thought of visiting men and women in concrete prisons where they are confined 24/7?

Then, as God's child, you will have the strength and attitude to allow God's love to channel through you... *"And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:2) and "But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another"*

*(1Thessalonians 4:9).*

Remember again...

*"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).*



Christians are called to go the extra mile. We do not know the plans or the workings of an Almighty God in the hearts of everyone. We are to simply obey Him and thus be used perhaps to help set ones free from their individual prisons. If you, as a truly forgiven "born again" believer, will not allow yourself to be used of God, is this not a shame and misuse of you as God's property? *"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1Corinthians 6:20).* Consider His commands to you... *"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).* Have you ever

Remember, prison is not always physical. It can be happening right next door to you, in the life of a co-worker, a stressed husband, an overworked mother, a man or woman running from their past and present temptations, a neglected child and many others. Do you know the "Key" to their freedom? Are you sharing it with them? Are you in prison now even as you read these words? PLEASE

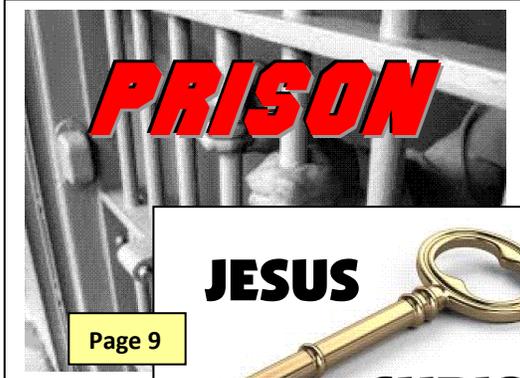
believe God. He is the key to your locked prison door. Freedom is one step away!!!

We Christians do not have to compromise in our walk to reach those in whatever prison they may be in. Jesus Christ did not. However, we do have to apply the key with love and patience, not always expecting the prisoner to grasp the key at the first, second or however many times you offer it to them. God is likely planting seeds in their minds and you are called to water them.

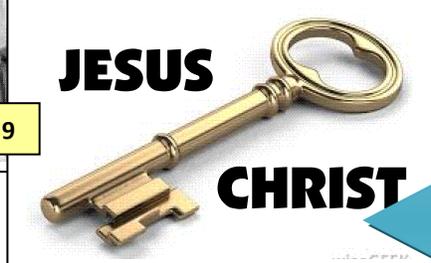
I hope you are motivated to allow Jesus Christ to free you and then be motivated to hold Him out to other captives and help set them free emotionally, mentally and sometimes physically...and definitely, spiritually.

**S.G., Huntsville, Texas**

# Prison Epistles

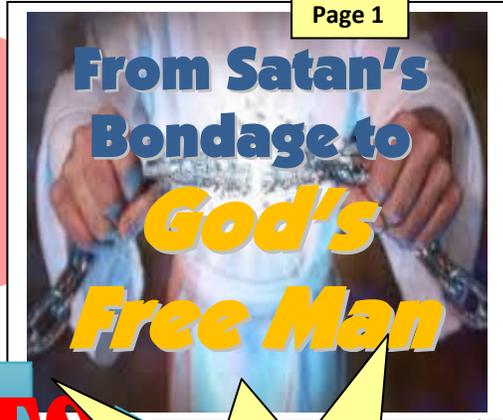


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**NEVER  
Give Up!**



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**RIDDLES**



Page 4

**OUR MINDS  
YOUR SUGGESTIONS**

TELL FRIENDS AND RELATIVES  
TO SEE THIS ON THE  
INTERNET...  
[PrisonEpistles.org](http://PrisonEpistles.org)

The Lord Jesus Christ said, "You MUST be born again."

Some Christians who are only and sufficiently a part of the church the Lord is building, of which all and only His children belong (Acts 2:47)  
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