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Spring 2019

# **Prison Epistles**

## **"SET**

## **OFF"**

**AFTER 31 YEARS,  
EXTENDED  
12 MORE!!!**

On July 19, 2017, I had a parole hearing. On August 14, 2017 I had been locked up for 31 years, 7 months, 1 week and three days. That day my counselor called me into his office and said the board sent their decision and it wasn't good. He told me the parole board deemed me "unparolable", that 60 months had been added to my PERD (Parole Eligibility Release Date) and that my ERD (Eligible Release Date) had been extended to May 28, 2029. He said I would have a "Cashew" hearing in 2025. In effect, all of my "earned good-time" had been taken away from me and I was/am being denied the opportunity to earn any more "good-time." They are NOW saying I have to serve my sentence "day for day."

For those of us who live one day at a time--as we all should, this means when I was told of board's decision, I had already been in prison for 11,544 days and they had just added another 4,305 days or 11 years, 9 months, and 2 weeks. That's not all. My first "bit" in prison

was from August 19, 1975 to April 5, 1985 for a total of approximately 9 years, 7 months, 3 weeks, and 4 days, or 3,524 days. I've been locked up for virtually my entire adult life.

To say the least, it's amazing what went through my mind when I received the news. My first thought was: "What!?" (unbelief).

That thought led to my reaction of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual shock causing a sense of numbness and disbelief. This could not be happening! For over 20 years, my prayers, heart, mind, and dreams had been set on the hope that I would be paroled and deported to Mexico by late November of 2017. However those prayers, hopes, and dreams were shattered in an instant the morning of August 14, 2017.

I spent my mid-teens to my mid 30's in active drug addiction. At first my "drug of choice" was any drug that got me high. My first addiction was to alcohol. Then I was turned on to heroin. Heroin became my drug of choice and to a certain extent, my god. Even so, I was still of the mind set that if it got me high, I used it. There were times when I went through opiate withdrawal that it felt like I was dying. So, even with my drug history, one of the worst - if not the worst thoughts that I ever had in my life entered my mind, the thought that I could end my life via a drug overdose and stop "doing time." That mere thought of suicide scared me beyond what words can describe. I thank God that idea did not last for more than a second or so, and that it shocked me into other thoughts. These other thoughts involved my age and my health, and thoughts about being abandoned and/or forgotten.

Over the years, I've met a lot of men who have been forgotten by most, if not all of the people they knew "out there." Or at least they had no

communication with anyone outside these prison walls/fences. For awhile, I had been alienated from my family. I won't even mention my "friends" who were dope partners, crime partners, "gang-brothers", or even old girlfriends. Like many of you that are reading this, I have two families. There is the family I was physically born into and a family of God. After my parents died, (Mom in 2003, Dad in early 2004), I lost contact with all of my biological family. Prior to my parent's death, I had little, if any, contact with the rest of my biological family. At that time, I felt forgotten.

I felt abandoned another time when I quit the gang because none of the members would speak to me. That was to be expected I because according to the rules of the gang, I was considered "dead"! Quitting is considered betrayal and the rule stated the only way out is by death. At that time I was just beginning to "grow in Christ." I would pray to God to help me find others with whom I could have spiritual fellowship. I felt I needed others with whom to talk and learn more about God. There were some volunteer chaplains that did come around from time-to-time, but they would usually spend no more than 20 minutes or so with me.

One time between 10 to 15 volunteers came to the prison I was in. They were going one man to a cell and a man stopped to see me. He began talking very rapidly about Jesus. It seemed as if the words coming of his mouth were traveling over 100 miles per hour! When I was finally able to get a word in edge-wise, I told him I was a "born again believer." He looked above my cell door to where the cell

number was, wrote something on a card which said "Good", and abruptly walked away. He went to another cell where there wasn't a volunteer and since no one else came to my cell, I figured they wanted to talk only with unbelievers. It was sad because most of the men in the cells in "ad-seg" verbally chased them away.

Our God is AWESOME! As broken as I felt, our Father God reminded me of some prayers and



**JUAN WITH SOME OF HIS CHRISTIAN FAMILY**

decisions I had made in the past. When I was in the Texas prison system for the sole reason that I was a confirmed gang member, I spent 11 years and 3 months in Administrative Segregation (Ad Seg), locked up for 23 hours a day. Because of my belief in Christ Jesus as

my Lord and Savior, I quit the gang in 1992. I told the prison staff that I quit, thus I no longer belonged in "Ad Seg". The G.I.U. (Gang Intelligence Unit) officer at the prison where I was located at the time even told me that they knew I was no longer a gang-member. At a Classification Committee hearing, I was told that they found evidence; "kites" (prison letters)- confiscated during cell searches that stated I was on a hit list for having quit the gang. Even so, they still wouldn't let me out of ad seg!

Through prayer and meditation, I made a decision in my heart. **I told God that no matter where I was, I would continue to live "in Christ" to the best of my ability.** That was the first memory God brought into my mind when I received the parole board's decision.

The second memory was from around that same time when **I came to believe with all my heart that God's love is beyond measure.** I came to understand that there is nothing we can do to make God love us any more than He does right now. When we love someone, we naturally want what we THINK to be the best for that person, and our love is very condition-al. God's love is unconditional! Therefore, how much more-so does God want for us what He KNOWS is to be the best for each of us? If I truly believe that, then **I must conclude that if there was a better place for me to be at right now, then God would have me there.** But since here is where I am now, then here must be the best place for me right now. All believers should place ourselves in that TRUTH.

Even with those truths anew, fresh in my heart and mind, it seemed like my world was caving in all around me. It looked as if my family was again distancing themselves from me. Everything I did appeared to go wrong. I went into mindless, baseless arguments and/or disagreements with people, I've come to care about in here and even with people I do my best to avoid. Most of the issues that were getting to me were petty and minor misunderstandings. A grain of sand hardly weighs at all, but two grains of sand the weight doubles and a handful of sand weighs that much more. I felt as if I had just gotten a truck load of wet sand dumped on me after hearing the results of the parole board decision.

I mentioned that I have two families. Those of us who have surrendered their lives to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord have two families! Besides our first family we also have a family that we are "born-again" into. Our spiritual family is made up of millions, if not billions, of "born-again believers." but in reality I am close to only a few. Over the years I've met hundreds in this family, but over time, most dropped out of my life.

In our first biological families, we have what is known as our immediate family. They are our parents, our siblings, our children, and then

our spouses. Beyond them we have our extended family made up of our grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and in-laws.

Our spiritual family consists of our Creator, our Father God, and everybody else who are "born again" Christians throughout the entire world. There is no extended spiritual family (see John 1:12, 11:52; Rom 8:17; Gal 3:26, and Eph. 4:4). Man made denominations have so divided our spiritual family so that we appear to be an extended family as seen from the eyes of the world looking in... but that is a subject for another time.

Through correspondence in late 2003 or early 2004, I met a brother and sister who later-on introduced me to the rest of those whom I consider to be my closest spiritual family members. Since I've come to know this part of the body of Christ they have never forgotten about me. Four members of my spiritual family came to visit me shortly after I received the parole board's decision. They live in Texas and I'm in the State of Washington so the cost of time, fuel, lodging, food, etc. to get here and return to Texas is not measured by them, nor is the amount of their love measured as it can only be measured by God Who loves me and loves them.

At our visit, one of the brothers said he felt that what I was going through had "something to do with principalities and powers" (Ephesians 3:10). Our visit was very spiritually and emotionally comforting for me, and everything we talked about gave me much to pray and think about.

In a phone conversation, I told the woman whom I love what was going on with me, and what was going on around me, and she said it seemed what I was going through was a "satanic attack". After that, I began to look at my situation in a different light, especially considering what the visiting minister said to me that all of this had "something to do with demonstrating Christ in me to principalities and powers who are looking on at me now." Our Lord said: "...The spirit is willing but the



flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). The first part of the verse states: "keep watching and praying that you not enter in temptation." Certainly I do not want to be tempted to be discouraged nor do I want to cease trusting in God to keep me where He wants me to be at any given time to be a shining light for Him in this ever darkening world. Looking back, I must conclude that because of my situation with the parole board and all the events going on around me, I fell into temptation because I focused on the problems and their effects that they were having on my flesh, on my "self".

I felt anger stir within me at times and because I didn't work my anger out, the stress built up within me. At other times I was just plain disappointed in general. More stress built up within me (see Eph. 4:26). I even thought: "here I've been behaving all these years and these things are happening to me now. Why?"



**JUAN WITH MORE OF HIS CHRISTIAN FAMILY**

Romans 8:28 tells us: *"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*

In 1st Thessalonians 5:16-18 it says: *"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."*

Turning a negative into a positive as in the case of anger is not only possible, it is scriptural. Notice that Romans 8:28 says that *"all things."* Also notice that 1 Thessalonians 5:18 states that we are to give thanks to God *"in everything,"* again, not in some things, but in EVERYTHING!

Once more God brought back into my mind old

prayers, decisions, and lessons that He has taught me in Christ through His Holy Spirit. A long time ago I learned a lot of truth from Romans 8:6-8, *"For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those that are in the flesh cannot please God."*

Around 20 years ago, I wrote: "I know what Peter went through when he walked on water. I look at my life as if I am walking on water

while there are storms all around me. Every time I've taken my eyes off Jesus I began to sink. But every time I have put my eyes back where they belong, He has kept me *"walking on water,"* at peace while in the storm. (see Matt. 14:24-31)

I also wrote:

"...knowing that according to the laws of the States of Texas, New Mexico, and Washington, I am not eligible for parole until AT THE VERY LEAST, the year 2017, and knowing that according to the laws of the United States of America, I am to be deported from the country I have lived in since May of 1955 when I was only one year old. "

In that cell, I also wrote:

**"I learned that I am FREE, free from the power of sin, which is death, and this means I have ETERNAL LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS! In prison I have experienced the greatest miracle of all. I was spiritually dead, but now I live!"**

**"I have the Holy Spirit of God living in me, guiding me and teaching me who I am in Christ and about the things that**

**God has freely given us [see 1 Corinthians 2:12]. I don't walk on water and I doubt that I ever will, but there are plenty of storms going on around me all the time, but nevertheless, I am in Christ and Christ is in me. [see Galatians 2:20, and 1 John 4:13-15] through His Holy Spirit [1 Corinthians 3:16] and Christ is greater than he, (the devil, or anything else in the world). [1 John 4:4]**

Simply put, when I received the parole boards' decision, I took my eyes off Jesus and I focused on the storms going

on around me. My problems just looped into each other. I began a downward spiral. Truly the Spirit is willing but my flesh is weak. As I began to focus back on Jesus, some of the problems remained, others disappeared or settled themselves, and new ones took their place, but the way I see and deal with them has changed because I have "the mind of Christ." ***"For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."*** [1 Cor 2:16].

As I mentioned earlier, four members of our spiritual family came to visit me. There were at least 4 others of this part of the Lord's Church that wanted to visit as well, but were not able to. Two of those brethren are the first ones I met. Several years ago they found Tony for me who is my youngest brother. Through my brother Tony, I've made contact with others of my family. About three years ago, two cousins sought me out and found me, but that's another testimony of the power of God in my life.

Years ago, I prayed to God for fellowship when I was feeling alone. Over time, as I drew

closer to God, He caused a spurt of spiritual growth in my life and within a few months afterwards, I decided to live for Christ no matter what and no matter where I was whether it be in administration segregation or released to general population.



**If it were possible, I now believe, even more than ever, that if there were a better place for me to be at right now, God would have me there. But here is where I am and it is here where I will endeavor to be what He wants me to be for Him and for His glory.**

**When we believe God truly loves us and wants only the best for us, every word in our Bible becomes reality in our lives. God, in Christ, through His Holy Spirit was with me back then, just as He is with me now, and will be forever. (Heb 13:8)**

Years ago, I read about a man who whenever he encountered problems would rub his hands together and say: "I wonder how God is going to take care of this one?" No matter where I am, I will be me in Christ, and I can hardly wait to see how God is going to handle the parole board's decision.

**Oh yeah, and I'm going to keep behaving like God wants me to because that is who I am IN CHRIST!**

Write to P.O. Box 1181, Joshua, TX 76058 and ask for a copy o...

**"No Longer of The Life."**

True Christianity is NOT based on human hopes or wishes. See article page 10.

# IF I HAD BEEN THERE?

I have wondered what I would have done had I been there actually seeing Jesus Christ's crucifixion for my sins? I would not have charged the husky battle scared Roman tormentors with all their armor and weapons. I am much too much a coward for that. Knowing that my GOD was allowing Himself to endure this shame and pain for me I think I would have shouted at Him... **"PLEASE STOP! I AM NOT WORTH IT!!!!"**

And, He could have stopped them. He could have spoken just a word like he did that calmed the storming sea, only now thousands of angels would have appeared and perhaps destroyed not only His tormentors but the whole world! But instead, I suspect He would have turned and whispered...



***"You are worth it to Me."***

# **"I DIDN'T DO NOTHING!"**

Things are going good for me here. The closer I draw to our Father the closer He draws to me and opens my eyes to His teachings. The most recent thing that happened really gave me a kick!

My mom wrote me a response to my setback with my brother. Me and her are getting really close, praise Jesus! She told me that she is seeing growth in how I handled it and she was proud of me. Then she said, "Whatever you're doing keep it up," she liked it. I felt good.

Later that night I was relaxing and thinking about her letter...."Keep doing what I had been doing"...What have I been doing? The only thing I've done lately is

reading my Bible and praying to my Father more. Then I started thinking about recent prayers like, "Please take charge of my life Father. I can't do this without You and I'm tired of being angry. That's not the kind of man I want to be."

"Keep doing what I have been doing." I didn't do nothing. My heavenly Father did it all! All I did was got tired of making a mess and gave up and let

God! It's all Him, not me! I prayed right then and there thanking and praising Him.

I know I'm hard-headed. People have been telling me that's all I've ever had to do but I also believe God walked me this way through the lessons. If I had taken people's word for it I wouldn't have made such an impact on me. It was more than just the lessons He wanted to teach me. It brought me so much more in focus, how much He cares for us. It just makes my heart want to explode knowing He loves me and out of all the Christians and people in this world He has time for me.

*It's really amazing!*

7

## X-WORD PUZZLE

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**EARN CIRCIFICATES!**

**MAILED  
BIBLE  
STUDY  
COURSES**

**NOTHING TO JOIN**

**Proceed at your own pace.**

**Ask questions on any subject.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:

**P.O. Box 1181, Joshua, TX  
76058**

### ACROSS

1. Apostle Paul's other name.
2. Fisherman apostle.
6. Jesus Christ has promised to \_\_\_\_\_.


7. In Jesus Christ a person is \_\_\_\_\_.

8. Salvation is a \_\_\_\_\_ with Jesus Christ.

### DOWN

1. First Christian martyr.
3. Jesus Christ rose from the dead in \_\_\_\_\_ days.
4. Doctor who wrote the Book of Acts.
5. Jesus Christ said, "You must be \_\_\_\_\_ again."
9. When a person is "born again" they are \_\_\_\_\_ Christ and Christ is \_\_\_\_\_ them!





# I STRUGGLED WITH DRUGS AND WHO I WAS

My name is Jeremy, 39, from a small town north of Ft. Worth. I grew up in a dysfunctional home with both parents using and my dad selling. So that's the life I chose, with periods of "normality." Like when I found out I was going to be a father. I cleaned up and tried so hard to be a father but I didn't know love or how to give it. No, I'm not downing my parents, they were both there. Both now know Christ and are very loving, good people.

So I found myself in and out of prison and a failure as a father. My third time getting out of prison I vowed I wasn't ever going back. In four years, through hard work, I built a pretty good life. I was making 200K a year in the oilfield; brand new truck even bought a hotel on a lake. Hired a lawyer, was able to have visitation with my daughter. I had it all under control. I was a house built on a sand foundation. Oil fell and I got laid off and went back to selling dope. Then the feds came.

As I was waiting to get sentenced I did what most of us do when we're down in a hole... I started praying. I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior. He was going to fix all this for me. I prayed I wouldn't lose everything. I lost everything. I prayed my wife wouldn't leave. She left. I prayed the judge would go my way. He went the other.

A Christian brother writes this at the end of all his letters... (Proverbs 3:5-7)

*"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil."*

God doesn't fix things the way we think they should be and praise Him for that! I thought I needed all those prayers answered my way. God has given me so much more. He loves me. Doing that showed me how to love others. He comforts me. When I'm sitting in this prison surrounded by people every second of the day and feel like I'm alone in the desert, He comforts me.

Couple of weeks ago my Mom passed away out of the blue. He showed me the beauty of His calling her home. I haven't talked to my daughter in 3 years but I trust in Him that I will in His time. He is changing me into a better man so when I do talk to her I don't break her heart again.

The hardest part of all this is the control. There are times I try to take the reins back and He will give them to me. When I find myself lost and making a mess, He is there with open arms. I'm slowly learning it's better when I just let go and let God. I'm the hard head from the letter in this paper. There's not a second in the day that our Father isn't there for us. I'm thankful for that. I can't do this without Him and I'm betting you can't either. Peace and God bless!



# RIDDLES

Riddle answers, page 11



Going to a church doesn't make you a Christian anymore than standing in a garage makes you a car.

Empty cans make the most noise.

When "YOU" change, everything else changes.

It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice.

A road sign tells of the path, it does not suggest a path. A sign from God tells of the way, it does not suggest a way

A wise man's actions speak for him.

Truly great people don't go around telling everyone how great they are everyone already knows.

Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people.

90% of the SOLUTION may be to put YOUR hands on the problem.

He who knows not and knows not that he knows not, he is a fool – shun him!  
 He who knows not and knows that he knows not, he is teachable, teach him!  
 He who knows, and knows not that he knows, he is asleep, wake him!  
 He who really does know and knows that he knows, he is wise, follow him!

**1.** What ten letter word starts with gas?

**2.** There is a word and six letters it contains. Take one away and twelve is what remains. What word is it?

**3.** A farmer has a wolf, a chicken, and a bag of grain he needs to get across a river. He has one boat to take them all across. He can only take one at a time. He can't leave the wolf alone with chicken or the chicken alone with grain. How does he do it?

**4.** There is a dog on one side of a lake and a woman on the other. The woman calls the dog over and when he gets there he is not wet at all. How is this possible?

**5.** A woman is sitting in her hotel room when there is a knock at the door. She opens the door to find a man whom she has never seen before. The man said "Oh I'm sorry, I thought this was my room." He then went down the hallway and took the elevator. The woman went back into her room and phoned security. Why?

**6.** What kind of room has no doors or windows?

## Wishing, Hoping or KNOWING?

The true Christian life is NOT based upon just wishing or hoping. It is based upon FACT!

If you had a close friend whose life you observed and every time he told you something it PROVED to be true...would you not have confidence in him?

It has been estimated that during the life of the Lord Jesus Christ He fulfilled some 300 old testament prophecies about Himself.

In advance He told of what would happen to Him when He entered Jerusalem for the last time... (*Mt 20:18-19*)  
*"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again."*

In addition, the life principles about which He taught have all proved to be accurate and true.

Can I thus **KNOW** that when I surrender to Him He will forgive all my sins, give me a new life of peace and purpose and guarantee me a place with Him in heaven? **YES!!!**

**"For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'"**

(Romans 10:13)

## A PERSONAL LETTER FROM GOD TO YOU

*You may not know me yet, but I know you very well. In fact, I know all about you. I saw you while you were still in your mother's womb (*Psa 139:13*) and I wonderfully made you (*Psa 139:14*) so you were not a mistake. I know every word you speak, see every action you take and I know why you do it because I know your thoughts before you do (*Psa 139:2-4*). I even know the number of hairs on your head (*Matt 10:30*)! I know every sin you have committed and yet I deeply love you (*Rom 5:8*). I have also seen you when you wept in secret (*Psa 56:8*).*

*After all, I made you in My own image (*Gen 1:27*). Thus, as my created physical offspring you live and move because of Me (*Acts 17:28*). Whether you are awake or asleep my thoughts toward you are more than the number of the sand (*Psa 139:17-18*). Every good thing you have ever received is because and from Me (*Jas 1:17*).*

*I have great love and mercy toward you and I want to comfort you in all your pain and sorrow (*2Cor 1:3-4*). I am near you when you are broken hearted and if you have a contrite spirit I can and will save you (*Psa 34:18*). Evidence of My love for you is that I did not spare my only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, but allowed Him to die in your place (*Rom 8:32*) on that awful cross!*

*I have some really good news for you, in fact, the grandest news! It is not by going to church, submitting to any religious ceremonies or by a list of good works that you may become My blessed child (*Tit 3:5*). It*

is by simply believing that Jesus Christ has already paid for all your sins by His death, burial and His resurrection (John 3:16, 1Cor 15:3-4) in your place. I did not send Jesus Christ into the world to condemn you but so that you might be saved and become part of My family!

I promise that if you will simply cry out to Me I will hear you (Psa 40:1 and Rom 10:13) and make you a new creation (2Cor 5:17). I will set your feet on a rock and give you a song in your heart (Psa 40:2-3). If you will trust Me and stop doing things your own way I will direct your life as a loving Father (Pro 3:5-6) and lead you in the paths of righteousness (Psa 23:3). I will take you from your uncertain life into My eternal life (John 3:36). And when it is time for you to come be with Me in heaven, I will arrange a great "Welcome Home" for you into My everlasting kingdom (2Pet 1:11). I am anxiously looking forward to that (Psa 116:15).

My love for and to you is a free gift (Eph 2:8-9), but in order to have it you must be willing to receive it (1Chron 28:9). If you will accept the sacrifice of My Son Jesus Christ as payment for all your sins, I will gladly own you as my forgiven child (1John 3:1-3) and all heaven will rejoice (Luke 15:7). I want to give you a new life (2Cor 5:17) of peace (Rom 5:1). I do not want you to perish (2Pet 3:9). If you are not willing, it will break my heart (Luke 13:34), but I will not force you to become My child.

The very best time to come to Me and be spiritually "born again" (John 3:3) is right NOW (2Cor 6:2)!

**Almighty God**

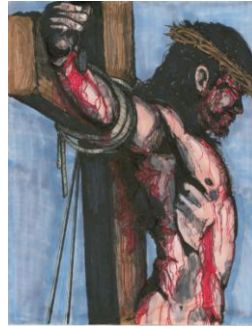
## JESUS CHRIST ON THE CROSS

He is hanging there paying for all your sins, your foolishness, your shame and your pride.

He is hanging there because

**YOU** are the reason He

cried out...  
"My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"



He was hanging there in **YOUR** place!

### RIDDLE ANSWERS

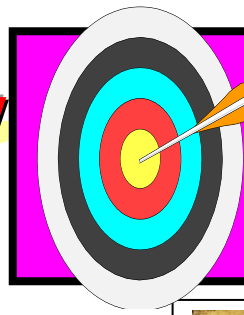
1. Automobile
2. Dozens
3. He takes chicken first. He takes the wolf over second and comes back with the chicken. He drops off the chicken and takes the grain to the other side with the wolf. Last he goes back to get the chicken and brings him across.
4. The lake was frozen
5. You don't knock on the door of your own room.
6. A mushroom

### X-WORD ANSWERS

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# "SET OFF"

**AFTER 31 YEARS,  
EXTENDED 12 MORE!!!**



**SHORT  
SHOTS**

**PAGE 9**

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**WHO**

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**WAS I?**

**If I Had Been  
There!**



Pages 6

*A Personal Letter  
to YOU from  
Almighty God!*

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**RIDDLES**

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**EARN BIBLE STUDY  
CERTIFICATES...**

**See Page 7**

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*(Share this with a friend)*

**Spring 2019**

# **Prison Epistles**

**SEND YOUR TESTOMONY FOR JESUS CHRIST TO...**

Sent to inmates all over the state of Texas and beyond.  
Also published on the Internet.

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

**P.O. Box 1181  
Joshua, TX 76058**

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