

Prison Epistles

VICTORY

OVER DARKNESS

"Victory over Darkness" is the perfect example of how I would like to explain and describe my testimony as a new creation in Christ. Today as I stand here in jail wrongfully convicted along with a life sentence, the only thought in my mind is that this experience was truly needed and necessary for me. I needed to understand and grasp the concept of God's love for me, and every-one, in the existence in which we now live.

This experience has allowed me to truly reflect back on my life's decisions and choices that caused me to find myself in my current situation. At times I now find myself in disbelief that I am here living in this condition but unfortunately the reality of it is true.

I am here because, even though innocent of the crime for which I am convicted, God knew I needed to be here. I chose this path a long time ago while in my life of darkness and corruption. This is the only way I would have left

my old life behind and walked into the light of God's new path of light and out of the misery where I once wandered aimlessly and without true purpose.

Growing up I was never introduced or properly taught the word of God. My mother was always working and I never had a father around to guide me into the adult years. My mother did her best but as a Catholic all she did was light candles and say prayers to Mary, which to me never made sense as a child.

When I became an adult I could feel the presence of the Lord but I always chose to ignore His callings. Instead, I chose to listen to the wrong mentors and role models of the criminal underworld. I chose the evil and wicked life of selfish pleasures and disobedience that ultimately landed me in jail at age 31.

I thank God He sent an older Christian minister here to the prison who told me of God's plan for me, and for all mankind, that Jesus Christ not only paid for all our sins but He actually gives us a new life with a plan and purpose for each of us if we will only surrender our lives to Him.

I felt as though Christ was speaking words of comfort directly to me through this man's ministry at the Johnson County Jail. I saw him as a believer

walking in the true meaning of Christianity, passing God's grace on to us in every Bible study he conducted. He showed us God's way when we read, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9) in the Bible. It was by receiving that gift from God by faith that Jesus Christ became my Savior and gave me a new life not only here and now but for all eternity!

This Christian man made it clear that we are living in a time when Jesus Christ will actually live inside each of us if we invite Him to. Then it is up to us to seek out the truth in God's word of who we now really are as "new creatures in Christ" (1Corinthians 5:17).

It is obvious to me that my turning point was a few days after my arrest. That's when I began to reflect on the path I had chosen at a young age. Now, at the age of 33 years old I understand why this was necessary for me to experience this life altering change. Without coming to know the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior and true Christianity as a personal relationship with Him, not just religion, I would never have changed. I would have remained in the same dark path and mind set as before.

This imprisonment has saved my life in a way much more beneficial to me as God intended, rather than dying at an early age with a meaningless life and a meaningless death.

Adan Gaona



**God Who
Created the
Universe
Can Make a**



NEW YOU!

I grew up in an emotionally and physically abusive home. My step dad and mother weren't drunks but my mother was an abuser of prescription drugs.

From the ages of 4 to 8 I was sexually abused along with my sister by our uncle, our mother's brother. We even told our mom what was happening but she was from the "old school" of country folks who hid those things from the community so as not to endanger their good family name. Hurt, and afraid not to mention doubtful and non-trusting of authority figures, I started acting out at an early age becoming very rebellious in school as well as on the streets.

My first experience with God was at age 13 when I spent the night at a friend's house with whom I was smoking pot and drinking. The mother there made the children attend church with her regularly. There was at a revival at their



church where I felt convicted and yet loved for the first time in my life by anyone, the person of Jesus Christ. I said the sinner's prayer there in repentance of tears.

But it didn't last long (my change of heart). My wild days and drug use and minor crime turned into a more profound lifestyle for me. I started injection meth at 16 which would continue for 31 years.

Before I go any further let me explain some things I have come to realize. This is not to justify by any means any behavior but to say what my feelings and thoughts were at the time. I did feel as if my uncle loved me only because he showed me some kind of affection however wrong. At least I was acknowledged by an adult. All through school it kinda made me a perverted teenager who was obsessed with sex, dirty talking, and I slandered many girls with whom I needed to boost my sexual encounters to stroke my ego, of which most never happened anyway. But I was trying to hide my insecurities and rejection, shame and low self-esteem. Then when drugs numbed my pain I was able to be all I pretended to be, it was wonderful.

I met a great woman 7 years older than me when I was 20. She had a 10 year old daughter who didn't get along with

me and I think resented me because when she found out her mom was with child from me and we were to be married, she threw in my face that I wasn't her daddy and couldn't tell her what to do. I tried everything to get along but it wasn't working until one day I fondled her and she told her mother. I ended up in prison for 10 years. During which time I was able to elude detection for why I was in prison. Regardless of popular belief, people nowadays don't know what we are in prison for unless you tell them which I sure wasn't about to do. I was also able to become a skillful master of deception speaker. Not Aryan Brothers or Aryan Circle or other form of prison gang, just white guys who stuck together to keep from falling prey to assaultive inmates who forced extortion in either money or sexual favors which was the norm in the early mid 1990's. I was considered a stand up guy with a word; I did what I said I would either good or bad and took no flak from anyone.

When I was released after 10 years, I went right back to drugs, sex and lying so much more than before. My criminal activity continued to support my drug use. I posed as a member of a white prison gang but I wasn't. They ran background checks as well as Police Departments do. No child molester would be in their ranks. Even false claiming is a death wish so to show my skill and boldness of deception, I was undetected. Two years later I'm back in prison for forgery and received a 4 year sentence which I did all of it as well. I was released again with the same

happenstance as the first and was back in for theft and got a 3. I did all of that as well, but this time I came to a prison where church was a big thing and I started attending and reading God's



word daily, praying and doing Bible studies and God was doing wonderful things for me. I left prison the third time in 2013 after doing 17 calendar years out of 21 with a hope of never coming back.

But I went home to my mother's so I was worse off than before on pills and also dealt in stolen goods, Oxycontin, hydrocodone, Valium and Xanax to help support her income and pill habit all nice and legit like to the authorities and to the clientele who were meth-heads and heroin addicts. So it wasn't long before I rebelled against God and returned to my old lifestyle. The difference this time however, was that I knew I was living in sin and rebellion towards my Lord and Savior.

Finally, after a 3 week binge of speed I was wanted by the law in New Mexico and afraid of a life sentence as a habitual offender. I lay in the bed in the motel room hungry, broke, coming

down off speed, everyone afraid of me because I was utterly out of control, to the point they wouldn't answer my phone calls. If I went to their houses, lights were doused; T.V. and radios turned off, kids hushed. I could hear them inside trying to be quiet. So I'd shoot their car or their windows out. Even shot a couple of peoples' dogs in the yard in anger.

I cried out to God. They say Jesus will meet you wherever you're at in life and I was at rock bottom. I called God everything. I said fix me and I cursed God if He wouldn't. They were hard words from a hard man living a hard life. I woke the next morning with the manager telling me it was check out time and I had to leave. I had no money.

I called my mom asking for money to leave the state because the law was looking for me and I had no money. I had ripped her off as well. My mom loved money and pills more than life but she offered to meet me and give me \$200 but I had to pay her back and to meet her at the store because the cops might be watching her house. So I agreed and walked to the store, saw her van,

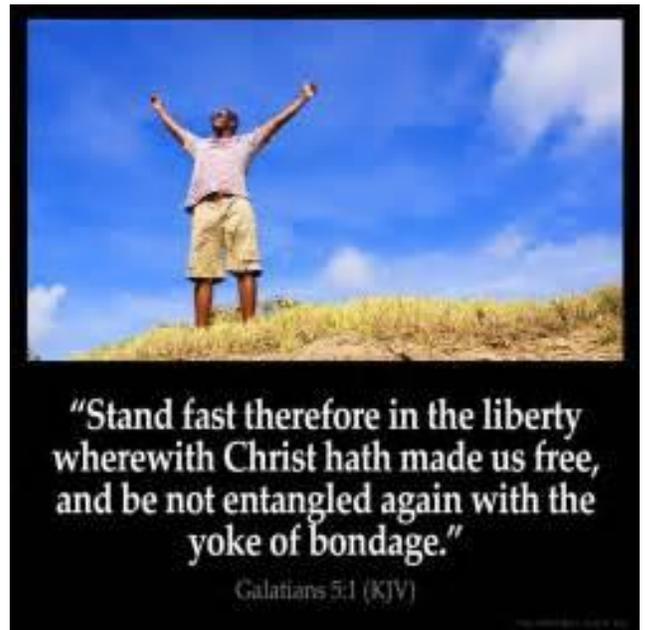
walked up to it and the County Deputy jumped out of it. I was surrounded by the



cops. My mother set me up with Crimestoppers for the reward. My closest, my own flesh and blood mother did this! I was furious and back in jail for the fourth time with charges pending in New Mexico and caught with less than 1 gram of Meth. I was sentenced to 8 years in Texas as a habitual/repeat offender and sent right back to the prison I had left from. I was embarrassed to say the least. All these guys I left professing never to return I'd have to face.

But when I got there and walked in the church, they all just shook their head and reached out their arms to receive me back into the fold. No condemnation. No resentment. Nothing. Just love. God's kind of love. I knew then that God answered my prayer from that motel room. He saved me from myself even though I talked to Him like a dog that night. He met me right where I was in the muck, the mud and the sin.

I started doing studies from a minister who said he was just part of the body of Jesus Christ. I told the minister how utterly inadequate I felt as a person and a failure in life. He sent me a study entitled "**The Truth Shall Make You Free**" (*You can request this from him at P.O. Box 1181, Joshua, TX 76058*). I realize now I have believed a lie my whole life. Rather the lie the devil told or the lie I told myself. Either way I believed the lie that God didn't love me, forgive me or have a plan for my life. But He does and I'm blessed with His love, mercy and grace.



The one thing I have learned more than any other is to surrender and obey. I've sat on the throne of my heart for 47 years and My Way has not worked. Now I do it God's Way. Which, by the way, is so much easier anyway? I like Jesus to sit on the throne of my heart now.

I have no support from the free world other than the love of this minister and one other. Yet I'm never hungry, my basic needs are met. I'm warm in the winter, cool in the summer, clean clothes, fresh water and an abundance of love pressed down, shaken together and running over to other men for the glory of God.

Everyone hopes to be free from prison and I'm no exception. But I'd like to stay right here and know that I've never been more free that I am now in here with the Word of God than I ever was out there without it. That is no lie. So if you have ever fallen, remember when you get up you must start by getting to your knees first so go ahead

HEAVEN IS MY HOME

and call out for help and forgiveness and I promise you our faithful and powerful awesome God is more than able willing and waiting for that call.

Jer. 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." That hope is Jesus Christ. That future is eternal Life with Him. Amen!

I love you all and embrace you in God's love. Peace forever and glory forevermore.

Joe

Update: New Mexico's charges were amended to a misdemeanor with time served. The devil is a liar and the father of them.

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

When the darkness of fears surround me with the crashing waves of lies, they soon would overwhelm me and drown the hope inside...

When angry raging giants come thundering, too big for me to fight, When grief and pain would strike me, like a robber in the night...

You give me wings like the eagles, When on Your name I call...

At times my feet get weary, at times my faith is small, Oh Lord, You know I need Your strength For I have no strength at all...

I can walk across the water when I am holding to God's hand, I can smile in the stormy weather when I don't understand.

Though these prison walls surround me, Your truth has made me free, I will lift my eyes toward heaven, My everlasting hope, my God, my LORD I see.

These prison walls can't keep me from walking with You inside, Under the shelter of Your wings, I safely shall abide.

You give me wings like eagles, When on Your name I call... Then taking flight into Your wondrous light, Where there is no darkness at all!

Yes He promised to never leave me, I know I am not alone, And by God's grace, I'll see His face, ***For Heaven in my Home.***

(1Peter 1:3-9, Philippians 4:13)

by Roberta Bradley

RIDDLES

Riddle
answers,
page 10.

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the throne; this being a metaphor for the kingdom. At the end of the contest all of the children came to the palace with their enormous and beautiful plants in hand. After he looks at all of the children's pots, he finally decides that the little girl with an empty pot will be the next Queen. Why did he choose this little girl over all of the other children with their beautiful plants?

1. A detective who was mere days from cracking an international smuggling ring has suddenly gone missing. While inspecting his last-known location, you find a note: 710 57735 3 5508 51 7718 Currently there are 3 suspects: Bill, John, and Todd. Can you break the detective's code and find the criminal's name?

2. You see a boat filled with people. You look again, but this time you don't see a single person on the boat. Why? Hint: The boat has not sunk!

3. I can fly but have no wings. I can cry but I have no eyes. Wherever I go, darkness follows me. What am I?

4. How can you physically stand behind your father while he is standing behind you?

5. A king has no sons, no daughters, and no queen. For this reason he must decide who will take the throne after he dies. To do this he decides that he will give all of the children of the kingdom a single seed. Whichever child has the largest, most beautiful plant will earn

6. An old man wanted to leave all of his money to one of his three sons, but he didn't know which one he should give it to. He gave each of them a few coins and told them to buy something that would be able to fill their living room. The first man bought straw, but there was not enough to fill the room. The second bought some sticks, but they still did not fill the room. The third man bought two things that filled the room, so he obtained his father's fortune. What were the two things that the man bought?

7. Two in a corner, 1 in a room, 0 in a house, but 1 in a shelter. What am I?

8. A man wants to enter an exclusive club, but he doesn't know the password. Another man walks to the door and the doorman says 12, the man says 6, and is let in. Another man walks up and the doorman says 6, the man says 3, and is let in. Thinking he had heard enough, he walks up to the door and the doorman says 10, he says 5, and he is not allowed in. What should he have said?

God Can and Will Change You, ***BUT NOT UNTIL YOU ASK HIM***

I really don't know where to start. You hear of so many men telling these great stories of how they had to overcome impossible odds. Mine is not that kind of a story.

From my youth I was always trying hard to please people and be something I was not. I spent many years trying to make people accept me. I was in my late teens when I started trying the worldly pleasures of pot, drinking, sex, cocaine and other bad things. I thought that if I would get married it would help me be responsible and give me a true identity. Wrong! I was still missing someone and something very badly.

In my youth it was normal for me to go to church on Sunday. Because my mom went, everyone went. However, I wasn't hearing anything that was being taught so I did not learn anything. Though I had a form of godliness (religion) I definitely denied God's right to rule my life.

With drugs in my life it was hard to tell right from wrong no matter if it was a business that was hiring or just selling some dope to make some easy cash and stay high. I was fighting with my wife in front of our children. Both of us were using and abusing each other. I was badly out of control after countless times of this but I see now that even then God was watching over and waiting for me.



The Bible says that the Lord chastens those He loves. While I was awaiting trial I was determined that I was not going to go to jail. If I made the \$120,000 bond I was going to jump bail but no one would post that bond for me. I was sent to prison for 8 years for aggravated robbery. That was the worst and the best eye-opening experience I ever had. I came to prison with low self-

esteem, hate and malicious thoughts about everything and everyone, but God changed all this when I finally surrendered to Him.

My cellmate constantly asked me to go to the church service to hear him play "Amazing Grace" on the piano. After

about 4 months I finally went and I heard my cellmate play and the minister preach as well as. I picked up a Bible after the service and began

reading as a pastime thing. One evening I started reading the book of Philemon in the Bible about a slave who had run away and then became a Christian. That story gripped my heart. The next morning I went to the phone to call home and found a Bible tract on salvation laying there by the phone. I picked up the tract and went back to my cell without even making the call. I lay down on my bunk and crawled under the cover to be away from everyone. I confessed to God my need for the Lord Jesus Christ who had paid the full penalty for my sins and received Him into my heart. I told the Lord that I did not want to be who I was anymore. I said that I needed Him to change me by the power of the Holy Spirit. From then on I devoted myself to serving the Lord. That was in August of 1995.



Unfortunately, after getting out of prison I strayed from the Lord and His way and soon found myself back in prison. Now, here for the second time, I think I have finally learned what the Lord said, "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." I still have troubles but I try to keep my eye on the Lord.

And, if I fall, I run to the Lord confessing my faults and He cleanses me as He promised that He would in 1John 1:9, "If we

confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I have let down my wife, my children and my friends and yet the Lord Jesus Christ still sees value in me. If he can value me he will also value you! I like to remember what the Lord told Cain, "And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." By the grace of God we can rule over the sin in our lives. It is your choice, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). He will take away the burdens you have been living with for so long.

S.G., Wynne Unit, Huntsville, TX



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RIDDLE

ANSWERS

Revenge is a poison meant for others, which we end up swallowing ourselves.

God has no grandchildren.

If you've never heard God's voice, stop talking so much!

Without forgiveness, there is no fellowship.

A kind gesture can reach a wound that only compassion can heal.

There is only one real happiness in life...
to be loved by God
and to love in return.

Sorrow looks back,
Worry looks around,
Faith looks up!!

Being quiet is fine, most people don't listen anyway.

The smartest people in the world change when they see they are wrong.

If things are not working out, stop doing them your way and do them God's way.

1. The criminal is Bill. If you look at the note upside down, you'll notice that the numbers resemble letters and that those letters form legible sentences. The message is "Bill is boss. He sells oil."

2. All the people on the boat are married.

3. A Cloud

4. Stand back to back

5. The King gave them all fake seeds and the little girl was the only honest child who didn't switch seeds.

6. The wise son brought a candle and a box of matches. After lighting the candle, the light filled the entire room.

7. The letter r

8. Three.

He should have replied by how many letters were in the number the doorman said.

The Lord Jesus Christ

(THE ONE WHO SPOKE THE WORLD INTO EXISTANCE)

said...

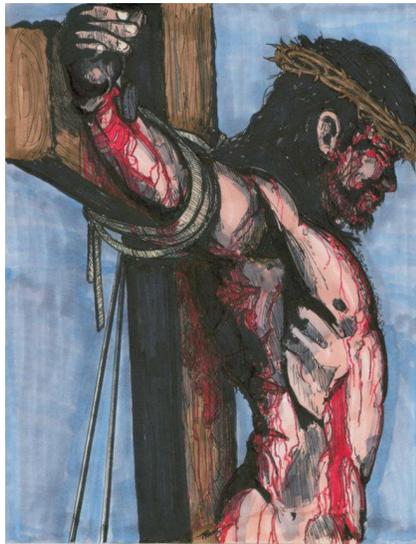
"For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

(John 18:37)

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. **He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.** And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

(John 3:16-20)

**PICTURE YOURSELF
AT THE FOOT OF
THE CROSS
LOOKING UP AT
JESUS CHRIST**



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

HE LOVES YOU!

***YOU are the reason He cried out,
"My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"***

He was hanging there in your place!

RIDDLES

PAGE 7

**TRUE BIBLICAL
CHRISTIANITY IS
NOT ABOUT RELIGION...**

True stories of real people whose
lives were changed by God!

**...IT IS ABOUT A
PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP
WITH JESUS CHRIST!**



EARN CERTIFICATES...PAGE 6

True Stories

Prison Epistles

WINTER 2017

SEND YOUR TESTOMONY FOR JESUS CHRIST TO...

P.O. 1181, Joshua, TX 76058

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)

**P.O. Box 1181
Ft Worth, TX 76058**

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