



Dear

The word 'prison' conjures up, usually negative thoughts in our minds, and rightly so. None of us really want to take up residency in a prison environment for any length of time. It is usually associated with crime and a prison is the result of the consequences of the crime.

Every one of us are at least acquainted with the concept of prisons. They have been in existence for a very long time. From the Biblical perspective, the word 'prison' is mentioned 84 times; with the first mention dating right back to Genesis 39. In just nine verses, the word 'prison' is mentioned eight times.

If prisons are to accommodate criminals, our immediate reaction would be that if the word 'prison' is mentioned eight times in nine closely connected verses, it must have been a very heinous crime.

Taking into consideration the lead up to these verses in Genesis 39, the brief history was that most of Jacob's sons were with their flocks of sheep some distance from their home territory watching and grazing their flocks. One of the sons who was not with them, Joseph, was asked by Jacob to go to see his brothers and find out about their well-being. Upon his arrival, he did not receive a warm welcome at all, but received a hostile affront.

The result of this family confrontation was Joseph being sold into the hands of a passing caravan of Ishmaelites on their trade route heading to Egypt. Consequently, they sold him to an officer to Pharaoh. He was a high-ranking officer, captain of the guard.

Potiphar took Joseph into his home environment and built a firm trust in him, so much so, that when he was absent, Potiphar entrusted all his affairs to Joseph. Potiphar's wife was not morally clean and upright, and tried to seduce Joseph into moral corruption. Joseph felt his moral responsibility to Potiphar and would not touch his wife. Due to her wickedness, worked against Joseph's high morals.

The result when Potiphar came home, he received the false report of his wife and had to act on it. The crime was worthy of death, but inspiration reveals Potiphar had doubts as to the validity of the report and eased the 'punishment' for Joseph to a prison sentence. "And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison." —Genesis 39:20

*"Prison walls
could not shut
out the light of
heaven's favor,
nor hinder his
advancement
in the divine
life, for the
Lord was with
Joseph, and
showed him
mercy."*

—Review and Herald,
February 21, 1898





"Both in the house of Potiphar and in the prison, Joseph received an education and training that, with the fear of God, prepared him for his high position as prime minister of the nation."

—Patriarchs and Prophets,
p.332



As mentioned at the beginning, the word 'prison' immediately brings thoughts of criminal activity, but the very first mention of the word in the Bible is totally unmerited as a crime. Joseph found himself unjustly thrust into prison for some time for actually upholding pure principles.

During his prison sentence, he became well accepted and was put in charge of the prison. "But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper."

—Genesis 39:21-23

During his prison stay, there were incarcerated Pharaoh's baker and butler. "And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward."

—Genesis 40:1-4

Both the baker and the butler were given dreams within those prison walls. "And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you."

—Genesis 40:5-8

As a result, Joseph, through the divine revelation, interpreted those dreams as to the future of those two servants. The bakers dream wasn't a welcome revelation, as he was to be executed, but the butler's dream was of reinstatement to his former position to wait on Pharaoh. Joseph was accurate with his interpretation. As the butler left the prison to go back to his position, Joseph did ask if the butler would remember him to Pharaoh to be brought out of the prison that his innocence may be rewarded with pardon from the prison sentence.

"But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon." —Genesis 40:14,15. But sadly, "Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him" —verse 23.

But this first account of a prison sentence ended well, Joseph became Prime Minister of the greatest and strongest then known nation. Innocent blood was freed and exonerated.

Samson

In the book of Judges 16, is the next mention of a prison. Samson finished up in prison — one could say because of his own stupidity. He was what we would call in our day, super-human. But with his continual parlaying with the enemy of Israel, he eventually wore out the mercy of God. "And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines...and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him."

—Judges 16:18-20



The sad reality of this was the God had been so merciful to Samson giving him super-human strength despite his continued and willing disobedience, but there had come a point where "the LORD was departed from him."

"But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house." —Judges 16:21

Obviously, the Philistines had a great victory over the God of heaven with Samson subdued and in their prison house. "Howbeit the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven. Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand. And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us. And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison house; and he made them sport: and they set him between the pillars." —Judges 16:22-25

But this account of prison ended reasonably well also, although at awful cost of losing his strength and his eyes, but he did finish up giving his heart back to God.

"And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left. And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life." —Judges 16:28-30

Jeremiah

In the book of Jeremiah there is mention of prison nineteen times. This was very close to Jeremiah, as he finished up there himself, an innocent man trying to warn Zedekiah and all of Israel of the invasion of Babylon. But Israel didn't want to hear the message of warning, so they got rid of the messenger! "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar. For then the king of Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem: and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up in the court of the prison, which was in the king of Judah's house. For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, Wherefore dost thou prophesy, and say, Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it." —Jeremiah 32:1-3

There are many other mentions of prison for Jeremiah, but this one example is sufficient to see innocent blood incarcerated unnecessarily.

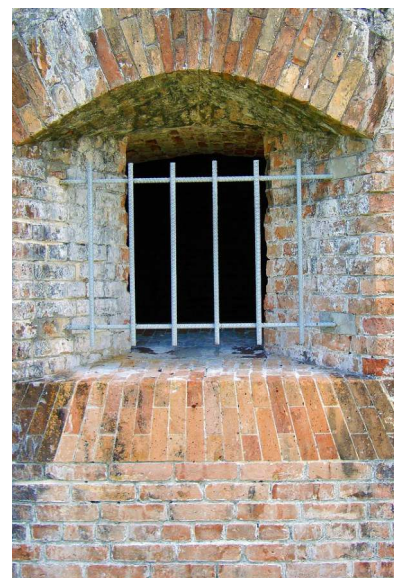
John the Baptist

From Jeremiah, the next mention of prison is in the book of Matthew 4. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, to prepare the way for Jesus to minister on this earth, reproved Herod for having his brother, Philip's wife, Herodias. A wrong marriage. As a result of that reproof, John was thrust into prison – the same as Joseph and Jeremiah, innocent blood upholding pure principles, but it didn't end well for John – at least in the earthly sense. This account of prison and the death of John even troubled Jesus greatly.

In Luke 23, we read of the trial of Jesus. Pilate is troubled at the mocking of Jesus and tries to avoid the pronouncing of the death sentence, as he knows he is dealing with an innocent man. One saving grace he thinks of, is that it is customary over the Passover time to let a prisoner go, so He tries to influence the loud rabble to let Jesus go. To make that decision more definite, he compares Barabbas, a prisoner for crimes of sedition and murder, but that crowd was determined to have Jesus crucified.

*"Will the Lord
forget His people
in this trying
hour? Did he
forget Noah, Lot,
Joseph, Elijah,
Jeremiah, or
Daniel? Though
enemies may
thrust them into
prison, yet
dungeon walls
cannot cut off
communication
between their
souls and Christ."*

*—From Here to Forever,
p.380*





"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities... He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was He stricken."

—Isaiah 53:5,8

Do we comprehend this plight? Here is Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world, the Son of God, righteous, pure, sinless, spotless and completely innocent being put to death – the death of a prisoner, while a prisoner, brutal and callous, rightfully in prison for crimes worthy of death, walks out those prison gates a free man! Do we comprehend what Jesus gave up to come and live in this prison of sin to take on what we deserve, that we may have what He deserved.

"Sorrow filled heaven as it was realized that man was lost and that the world which God had created was to be filled with mortals doomed to misery, sickness, and death, and that there was no way of escape for the offender. The whole family of Adam must die. I then saw the lovely Jesus and beheld an expression of sympathy and sorrow upon His countenance. Soon I saw Him approach the exceeding bright light which enshrouded the Father. Said my accompanying angel, 'He is in close converse with His Father.' The anxiety of the angels seemed to be intense while Jesus was communing with His Father. Three times He was shut in by the glorious light about the Father, and the third time He came from the Father we could see His person. His countenance was calm, free from all perplexity and trouble, and shone with a loveliness which words cannot describe. He then made known to the angelic choir that a way of escape had been made for lost man; that He had been pleading with His Father, and had obtained permission to give His own life as a ransom for the race, to bear their sins, and take the sentence of death upon Himself, thus opening a way whereby they might, through the merits of His blood, find pardon for past transgressions, and by obedience be brought back to the garden from which they were driven. Then they could again have access to the glorious, immortal fruit of the tree of life to which they had now forfeited all right." —Early Writings, p.126

Prisoners in Our Day

This brings us to some serious thoughts. While we have focused on innocent people being thrust into prison, or with Jesus, treated as a prisoner, no doubt that is still the same today, where innocent people are penalised while other criminals are living a free life. While there are better means to identify criminals in our day, there is still a great amount of humanity involved in tracking criminals, which can result in human error.

On the other hand, there are others who break laws and are not in the confines of a prison. Some criminals today walk the streets and live in their normal houses. Many people suffer at the hand of cruel people, some to suffer repeatedly at the hands of that cruelty. "The inhumanity of man toward man is our greatest sin." —Christ's Object Lessons, p.140. Many of these instigators of cruelty don't understand the extent of their strength to crush out the moral image of the God of love in their fellow human being and abuse runs riot in their minds, and in their environment, wherever that may be. These are criminals, who may not be in physical prisons, locked in by steel gates and key locks, but they are still criminals none-the-less.

The receivers of the severity of those who inflict the cruelty, become the innocent prisoners, but locked in their own homes, families or workplaces that function similar to a prison environment and they see no way out.

So now we bring this editorial to a personal level from a state level, we need to ask the question, "Is there still innocent people suffering, even around me, in my neighbourhood, in my work environment, even in my church or family?" Or perhaps another more personal question may be, "How do I crawl out from under the daily oppression I live under, never looking forward to the beginning or end of each day because of the hammering I will receive?" Or perhaps another statement, "I know I am ruining my family, but I have no control over my oppressive and cruel behaviour, and know not how to address it." But the perpetrators of these actions will be few to recognise their sinister and oppressive behaviour.

Friends, the only one remedy for all of these questions, the only one remedy for oppressive behaviour and cruelty is Jesus Christ. He is the only way through the innocent



being thrust into prison cells, while the real criminal walks free – for a time. He is the only way through daily oppression of cruel hands, He is the only remedy for all the wickedness and evil in this world from the days of Adam, right through to the last day.

Promises For Those Who Are Bound

I close here with some absolute promises – promises you can claim for any difficulty you may be facing by family, church, community, government, or even at the world level. Whether you are in prison rightly or wrongly, or out of prison but should be in there, here are some truly beautiful but so simple promises that will change the world, change the community, the church, the family and even the individual heart – yes, even yours.

"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies. —II Samuel 22:2-4

"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him. For who is God, save the LORD? and who is a rock, save our God? God is my strength and power: And he maketh my way perfect." —II Samuel 22:31-33

"O LORD my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me." —Psalm 7:1

"O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me." —Psalm 25:2

"In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity. Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work." —Psalm 62:7-12

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." —John 3:16,17

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." —Matthew 11:28-30

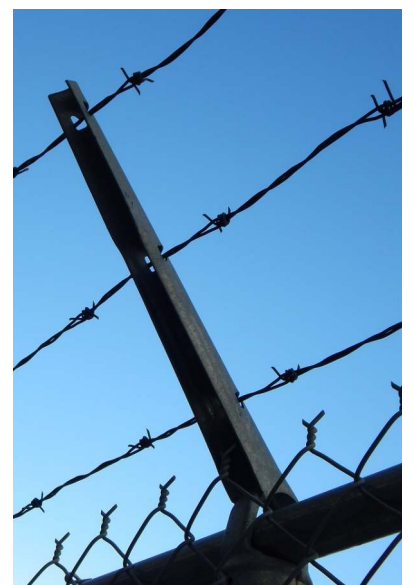
"Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabbath. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." —James 5:1-8

Doug Hurley

*"God does not
promise us ease,
honour, or
wealth in His
service: but He
assures us that
all needed
blessings will be
ours, 'with
persecutions' and
in the world to
come,
'everlasting life.'"*

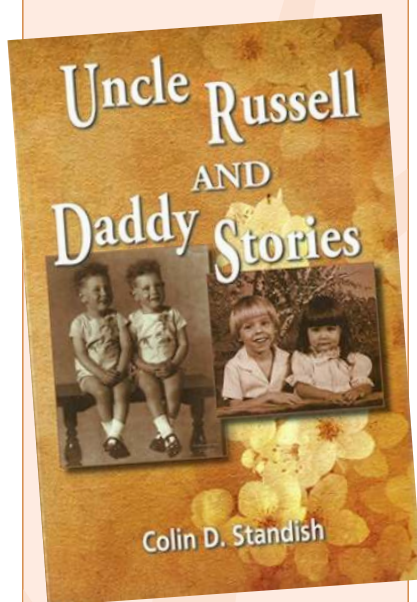
—Maranatha p.83



For the Young

Uncle Russell and Daddy Stories

Colin D. Standish



Stories of the twins, Russell and Colin Standish, and what they learned as boys and youth growing up in Australia.

These stories provide unique, first-hand insight into the happenings and events which led them to a lifetime of service for our Saviour.

Favourite stories for the children that also reach readers of all ages.

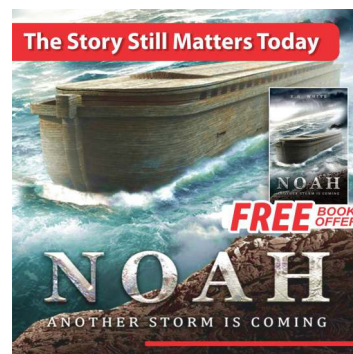
\$20.00 +p&p

In the Office

New systems: We are currently in the process of actively switching our accounting system to replace one we have used since the beginning of the ministry. Although it has had many updates over the years, technology has moved on and new systems make us able to integrate and improve our workflow. We are also just starting to incorporate dedicated inventory and order management software.

Orders and gifted books: The amount of orders via our website increased dramatically earlier in the year and peaked mid year and have settled at a little below double from this time last year, but the quantity and value of items per order has also increased. While this is positive from a business perspective, it also is also more encouraging from a ministry viewpoint as it means people are obtaining more and better resources to learn from and share with others. The health and outreach type products are where the most notable increase has been.

We have focused our gifted projects this year to make them more effective. With more targeted advertising and a more diverse selection of books and media, we have put our free gift offers into the hands of people who are more specifically requesting material and on topics that interest them. Continue to pray for these projects as they create interesting interactions and most importantly get the gospel message into homes and hearts.



Stocktake: On March 24 we conducted our annual full stocktake. We have over 90,000 items currently on hand. These include everything from large value grain mills and study Bibles, down to individual Bible study guides and pamphlets. Will you help us to get them into the hands of people who can benefit from these leaves of truth? During the stock take we noted some items that we have had for quite a while. Some of these are because we had a large quantity or because they are not well known and we haven't advertised them. We have created a listing of clearance items to let you know about them.

Donation Receipts: With the end of the financial year just past we are issuing donation summary receipts. These can be used to claim back income tax paid on the donated funds in New Zealand. If you would like a receipt and have not received one, be in touch.

Videos: New videos continue to be released for broadcast and on our YouTube channel. Among the recent content is a 7-part series, 'Connected' presented by Pr. Sam Braga at our 2023 camp and a 4-part practical health series by HubChat recorded at 2023 and 2024 camps. Subscribe to our channel (autumnleavesnz) to watch and share.



Projects

Building Project: Further progress has been made since our last update. Thank you!

Funding Progress

\$93.8k to raise Raised so far \$1,495,785.64



Events

Refreshed Hanmer Springs Camp 28 March – 1 April



Friday Night Live: Our next live-from-studio event is Friday evening on June 28. The popular Friday Night Live is a time of singing and devotion where you have the requests and we join with our local singers to enjoy an evening of fellowship and joy together.

Put it in your calendar now!

Summer Camps 2025: Plans are under way for our annual North Island camp from Tuesday January 14 through to Sunday January 19. There are also plans for reintroducing a South Island Bible Convention for Friday Evening and Sabbath, January 24, 25.

Over the Easter long weekend we had our first family-focused small-scale camp. This event was attended by about 45 people ranging in ages.

Each morning began with a combined worship time with music, prayer, a Bible story and lessons drawn from it. Breakfast followed and the mornings consisted of deeper study and lessons focused on separate ages. The afternoons included practical training and combined outdoor learning opportunities. The Hanmer Springs forest setting is beautiful, especially at this time of year. After the meals together we had an evening devotion and quiz-type Bible challenges for everyone to participate together in.

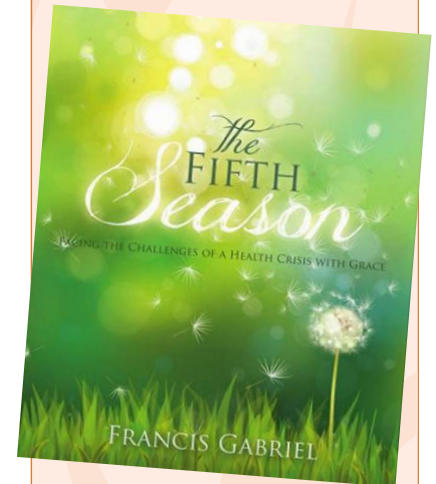
Those attending enjoyed the mix of spiritual and physical stimulation along with the family atmosphere where older folk and young children intermingled, learning and fellowshiping together.

Speakers included Elvis Placer from Australia and Doug Hurley as well as individuals presenting worships.



The Fifth Season

Francis Gabriel



If you—or someone you care about—wrestle with a major health crisis, *The Fifth Season* invites you to engage in living each moment fully surrendered to God's loving guidance. Whether you are the patient, the caregiver, or just called to provide support, you will find assurance that there is purpose to the struggles you encounter.

God deeply cares, so He tenderly beckons us, as His children, to partake of His plans for our lives. In answering His bidding, we have the opportunity to venture on a journey specifically designed for us to discover how serious illness, fear, doubt, and suffering lead to a sojourn on a richer avenue. Here, we will run into the secure embrace of the Almighty, who holds amazing plans for each of us—even in the face of dire illness.

\$18.00 +p&p

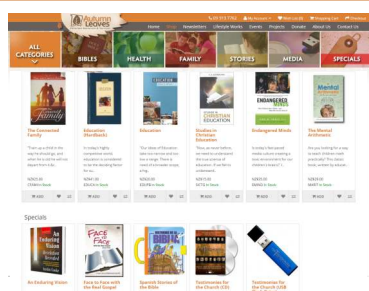
Jesus Accepts Our Intentions

"When it is in the heart to obey God, when efforts are put forth to this end, Jesus accepts this disposition and effort as man's best service, and He makes up for the deficiency with His own divine merit. But He will not accept those who claim to have faith in Him, and yet are disloyal to His Father's commandment." 1SM 382



"True sanctification means, perfect love, perfect obedience, perfect conformity to the will of God"

—Acts of the Apostles, p.565



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9057 Thousands of easy to understand explanations, helpful illustrations, useful archaeological and geographical information, Fascinating bible background information.

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