

# PROPHECY — Jesus and Jail

## By Jim Golden — Chapter Ten

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Paul said that he had learned to be content, no matter what situation he was in. As I stood in front of the judge awaiting sentencing, I was preparing to find out exactly what he meant. "Mr. Golden, do you have anything to say before this court passes sentence on you?" I had rehearsed my speech over and over in my mind. I knew exactly what I wanted to say, but now that the moment of truth had arrived it seemed overly melodramatic. "Your honor, if I were to tell this court that there are two forces in this world, good and evil, and each one is trying to gain control of our lives, it might think I am crazy. So I won't say that. But, I will say that whenever a person is under the influences of drugs like I was using, evil always has the upper hand. What I did was wrong and for that I am deeply sorry. I have tried to make restitution and completed a drug and alcohol rehab course. Now I can do no more than throw myself on the mercy of the court." As the final words dribbled down my chin I braced myself for the worst.

"After reviewing your case history, as well as your pre-sentence investigation report from the parole department and your letters of reference, I sentence you to five years in the State Penal Facility in Hagerstown." "Jesus, O Lord Jesus, no!" came a cry from the back of the courtroom. It was Jacoby Q., a godly woman, who lived down the street from my house. In the months after my conversion to Christ and just prior to my sentencing, we had spent many hours in prayer and ministry together. It was she that would eventually introduce me to a Christian teaching meeting that would change my life. "But," the judge continued, "I am going to suspend four and a half years of that and recommend you for the work release program." Murmurs of "Thank you, Jesus," and "Praise the Lord" filled the back of the court room. "You are to be reprimanded to the Sheriff's custody and incarcerated at the Seven Lochs County Correctional Facility until such time as a determination can be reached regarding your eligibility for the work release program. Your release and rehabilitation is in your own hands. I wish you luck and hope you make the most of the opportunity before you. A great number of people have gone to bat for you."

With Jesus as my constant companion, my stay in jail was like a paid vacation. I had never known such joy was possible. I couldn't have been happier if I had won a million dollar lottery. I immediately started taking bible study courses offered by the jail's chaplain. Two weeks before I was transferred to the "halfway house" work release program, everyone heard the story of my conversion, whether they wanted to or not! It isn't very often that you literally have a captive audience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It was during this time that I met some Marion Brotherhood Monks who ministered in a number of prison facilities in the area. Later I would share my testimony and the Gospel in Lorton Prison and other correctional facilities, through their ministry, with stirring results. In those days no one had told me that there were any differences between Christians or churches. As a result I believed the church was simply all those in every place who call on the name of the Lord.

Not too long after I moved from the "jailhouse" to the "halfway house" I met a man named Paul. Now "my" Paul wasn't anything like Jesus' Paul, as you will soon find out. He was a very large man whose simple-minded ways made him seem smaller than his true bulk. He was in jail for abusing one of his children. The exact nature and extent of the abuse was never really made clear to me but it was against his young son. Paul also had a small Mongoloid girl and two other daughters. His wife was a member of the Pentecostal

Church of God and his younger daughter and son both attended as well.

During one of his family's visits, I met his older daughter, Kathy. She was a 17 year old "free spirit" who, though she was attractive, acted like the son Paul wished he had had. Kathy was her father's right hand "man". Paul owned and operated his own small hauling business. It was actually more like a junk business because most of what he hauled away for other people he hauled into his house or backyard. At the time I was working for Rollins Park Shell. I had the "exalted" position of part time tow truck driver and gas pump "jockey."

When I first met the girl (Terry) I was going to marry, all I did was talk about her. I am certain I seized just about every opportunity I could to tell somebody about her. Fathers and mothers and grandparents do the same thing every time a new child is born. It is our nature, to talk about the things that excite us or the people we love. Now at this stage of my Christian walk, I was still infatuated with the one who saved my soul. I took advantage of every opportunity I had to tell everyone I met, towed or serviced at work, about my love for Jesus, come rain or shine. This evangelism, which I am sure could have been a little more tactful, was soon called to the attention of my employer.

John was a good old Baptist boy with the usual amount of vices. He smoked and drank on occasion. He cussed a little, looked at the ladies and was caught up into the material world a little too much. But he went to church on Sunday and paid his tithe. What was in his heart I won't try to judge, but he tolerated my witnessing until he started losing business. That may be partially true. I did have a tendency to try and do the Holy Spirit's job of convicting people of what I considered inappropriate behavior. In my mind, the fact that John was my boss couldn't stop me from showing him the error of his ways. You notice I said DID have a tendency. It doesn't take God long to remind us that it's not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.

This reminder started with me being fired from my job. Fortunately I had just completed my six month stay in jail and was free to start living my life with minimal supervision. I soon found myself living with the mechanic from Rollins Park, his wife and baby girl. I had known Tommy B., through his wife's sister, Sherry. Laurie was the calmer of the two. Sherry and I had been party friends in the "old" days. Being associated with people that lived like I used to and going to work with Paul and his daughter Kathy set the stage for my first flirtation with real temptation and failure.

"Filthy Frank", as he was lovingly referred to by his "bros", was my closest friend in the biker scene. One night I had led him to the Lord and he told me how much better he felt. I had never felt such happiness for another human being in my life. Frank had found his God and Savior and I had been the instrument that introduced the two of them. However, the next day he started smoking PCP again and I started trying to be the voice of The Holy Spirit again. I thought that God delivered everybody just like he delivered me, and that if he didn't, it was my job to make sure they delivered themselves! I suppose I had never realized what a miracle my instant deliverance from drugs was.

My pleas and exhortations did absolutely nothing for Frank, except drive him further and further away from me. "Man, you're no fun to be around anymore!" was his farewell quote to me. We hardly saw each other for a year.

It has been my experience that God's Word is true. Whatever a man plants he will harvest. I had been sowing seeds of pride and self-righteousness and within three months I would begin to reap a harvest. Sometime in the early period of my Christian life, I had a visit from an evil spirit. Naturally, I thought it was Satan. But the spirit never identified

itself. It came into my room and looked like a beautiful woman at first. It was as "cool" as a Spielberg special effect and I was quite taken with it. Then, suddenly, its appearance began to alter and it turned into a hideous looking creature resembling a crouching old man. I felt as though it was ancient and evil beyond my wildest dreams and I was frozen by horror. I felt as if I were going to be crushed and suffocated at the same time. Then this creature began to masturbate in front of me and mingled with heinous laughter said, "You still have a few strokes left for me!"

When I felt as if I was just about to die, a little voice seemed to come from inside of me and it said only one word. I don't know if the word came as an audible sound or if it was only a thought. But not only did I hear it, but the spirit heard it as well. "Jesus," came the voice from within, three times. It seemed as though it got louder or stronger each time. The first time caused the spirit to withdraw to the corner of the room. The second time it howled with pain, as though struck with some invisible whip and it began to hover in the corner near the ceiling. The third time it was overwhelmed with sheer terror and began to shake. It let out a scream that Scott and Karen heard in the next room and rocketed through the ceiling and out of sight. I slept for about 12 hours before I had enough strength to get up.

A few months or so after Frank said his farewell, this experience came back to mind, along with the "prophetic" message, "You still have a few strokes left for me!" For about the next six months or so, my spiritual life had more ups and downs than a roller coaster ride. I had all but returned to my old ways. I began using drugs, indulging in sexual immorality and partying for days at a time. But something was different. I had changed. I remember talking to Scott on the phone and telling him about the miserable state I was in. I hated the sin of my past but the deliverance that I had so easily experienced that night in my bedroom was nowhere to be found. It wasn't until God had taught me a little about his grace and delivering power that I learned not to take it for granted anymore. What I had taken for granted, God's precious Son had suffered and died to secure. My battle was to learn to live in the forgiveness of Calvary.