

## Prisoners Who Became Evangelists

God works in mysterious ways. However, one way in which He has been rather consistent over the centuries is His use of imprisoned people as great evangelists. Consider the case of several prisoners who showed God's greatness during their confinement.

**Joseph (Gen. 39-40)** – Joseph was sold as a slave by his own brethren, but no one could rob him of his integrity (Gen. 39:7-13). Falsely accused, Joseph the slave became Joseph the prisoner (Gen. 39:20). Some time later, Joseph made known the will of God to the entire nation of Egypt when he interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's butler and baker (Gen. 40). Egypt heard God's voice because of one faithful prisoner.

**Micaiah (1 Kings 22)** – Micaiah was summoned to give God's stamp of approval on Ahab and Jehoshaphat's war agenda. Because he told the truth, Micaiah was sent to prison by Ahab (1 Kings 22:26-28). As a prisoner, Micaiah became a living testament to the dependability of God's word and the peril of heeding false prophets.

**Young girl from Israel (2 Kings 5)** – A young girl was captured in a Syrian raid of Israel, and was taken to serve the wife of a general named Naaman. This young girl was able to tell the mighty Syrian general about a God in Israel who can cure leprosy (2 Kings 5:3-4). What an evangelist she became!

**Jeremiah (Jer. 37)** – Jeremiah's message from God to Judah was generally negative, and he was confined to prisons on a number of occasions. However, even the godless kings of the last days of Judah recognized that Jeremiah served the Lord. When they *really* wanted to know what God thought, they asked Jeremiah the prisoner: "Is there any word from the Lord?" (Jer. 37:17).

**Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3)** – Three young men from Judah found themselves commanded to bow to an idol, and they refused. Cast into a fiery furnace, they were saved by God's power (Dan. 3:24-25). The incredulous king was humbled for a time and made a decree that all of his nation should speak highly of the God who is able to deliver His servants in such amazing ways (Dan. 3:29).

**Daniel (Daniel 6)** – Daniel was known for his consistent prayer life, and so his enemies set a trap for him (Dan. 6:1-10). When he was found in violation of the king's law, Daniel was imprisoned in a den of lions for a night (Dan. 6:16-17). When the king found him alive the next morning, he proclaimed that men must, "Tremble and fear before the God of Daniel" (Dan. 6:26). Again, an entire nation heard of God because of one faithful prisoner.

**Paul and Silas (Acts 16)** – Imprisoned because they cast out an evil spirit, Paul and Silas began to sing praises to God (Acts 16:25). An earthquake opened the doors of

the prison, but none escaped. As a result, Paul and Silas were able to teach and baptize the Philippian jailer and his household (Acts 16:33-34).

**Paul (Phil. 1, 4)** – During one of his several imprisonments, Paul was placed under house arrest and was chained to royal guards for 24 hours a day. As a result it became evident, “To the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ” (Phil. 1:13). Later in the same letter Paul mentioned that his imprisonment had led to the conversion of some from Caesar’s household (Phil. 4:22).

God indeed works in amazing and mysterious ways. Thanks be to God who continually gives us tremendous opportunities to tell others about Him!

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