
Prison Houses

By David Wilkerson

August 3, 1986 How can anybody describe the agony and shame of an entire generation of youth wasting away on drugs, alcohol and violence'

Parents now live in terror, wondering how to keep their children safe from these vicious plagues! Mothers and fathers, some of them ministers, tell me of their shock and disbelief they experienced when they first discovered a son or daughter was a drug addict.

Fathers weep as their sons are caught — and a beloved child coldly admits, "It's true — I'm hooked! I'm a junkie! Mothers turn pale as daughters confess they have turned to prostitution and stealing to support a habit.

Jesus turned to the parents who followed Him to Golgotha — weeping and wailing — and He cried out, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and your children" (Luke 23:28). Jesus warned them a day was coming when many would rather be dead than alive. They would cry for the mountains to fall on them and crush them — because life would become unbearable. It's a time to weep for our children! It's a time to weep over little girls, some not even in their teens, selling their bodies. They smoke cocaine and crack until they are numb and mindless. They have not yet really lived, and already they are dying. They so soon grow hard and vicious. Once tender and caring, now they will even kill Mom, Dad or anyone else who interferes. Almost daily now, children crazed by crack are rising up in a frenzy of paranoia and are murdering parents.

Weep for teenage boys who are once obedient, good scholars and athletes, who now roam the dark streets preying on the elderly — plundering houses — holding guns to the heads of those stopped at traffic lights demanding money from everybody in the car.

I've Got the Stuff That Killed Len Bais. Weep for college students! Weep over the athletes; some claiming to be Christians have died overdosing on drugs. Drug dealers on 42nd Street in New York City are boldly advertising crack by saying, "I've got the stuff that killed Len Bais" (the basketball player who died using crack). Weep for thousands of college students now experimenting with drugs — many who party almost every night — many who are hopelessly hooked on drugs and alcohol.

Weep — because there is coming new and more potent drugs to enslave and imprison our young: black tar, China white, and new designer drugs thousands of times more powerful and addicting than heroin and cocaine.

Weep especially for so many Christians youth who are getting caught now in Satan's snare. They are falling on all sides, depressed and addicted so quickly.

Isaiah, the prophet, had a warning for a generation beyond his own. "Who among you will give ear? Who will hearken and hear for the time to come..." (Isaiah 42:23 KJV). What will this future generation be like? "But this is a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses; they are for a prey with no one to deliver them; and a spoil with no one to say, 'Give them back'..." (Isaiah 42:22).

Our young people are being robbed of their health, their morals and their sanity! Our parents are being robbed of the love and joy of children who are turning against them! So many parents now mourn for their lost ones. Our youth are enslaved in prison-houses of addiction to drugs, sex, alcohol

and violence. The devil is pouncing on them like a mad lion among helpless sheep.

The government of Poland has declared war on drugs and alcohol — and the problem only worsens. The United States government has now declared war on drugs, and our President calls for a drug-free society. Millions of dollars will be spent in vain. Isaiah said, "No one to deliver them, to bring them back!"

There is no hope other than Jesus Christ, no deliverer other than the Lamb who was slain for the sins of the world — so He could "set prisoners free!"

My great concern right now is two fold! One: To instill biblical truth into the minds and hearts of young people — which will produce the fear of God in them and keep them from the tricks and enticements of the devil. Two: To show those who are locked up in the devil's prison-house of addiction how to get free — and stay free! Bible truth alone illuminated by the Holy Spirit, sets men free!

Samson, a once — mighty prophet of God, ended up in Satan's prison-house! He started out as a blessed, chosen, Spirit-led child of God. "And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him, and Spirit of the Lord began to stir him" (Judges 13:24,25).

But Samson ends up as a slave to his lust, loses everything and is put in a prison-house. "The Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with chains of bronze, and he did grind in the prison house" (Judges 16:21). Samson's downfall into bondage and prison is our example — to fear and to learn from. Paul said, "Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our instruction upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

What God is saying is this: "Look at Samson's life, and learn by his mistakes. The story is true; it has been preserved in the Bible to teach you. Learn why a good and spiritual young man could end up so pitiful, blind and helpless!" Here are some of the lessons.

Education and Knowledge Alone Cannot Save Anyone From the Power of Sin! Samson was raised from birth as a Nazarite, which means he was educated and trained to avoid any contact with anything evil or corrupt. He was trained not to touch alcohol of any kind. He was to be totally separated unto God — separated from anything connected with death. From childhood, his parents indoctrinated him concerning his divine call to break Israel's bondage to the Philistines. They were the enemy — God's enemy! He was raised in the fear of God, and he knew very well that he must not touch evil, and especially must he never mingle with wicked Philistine crowd. No young man was better educated about his call and purpose in life. No one was more clearly warned of the danger of mixing with the ungodly. The Spirit of God had instructed him to be separate and clean.

But still, Samson walked right into enemy territory and fornicated with a Philistine harlot. "Then went Samson to Gaza, and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her..." (Judges 16:1).

All the years of education and separation — all the warnings about mingling — the many hours of teaching — all went up in smoke by one stubborn act of lust! All his past years of precise knowledge could not keep him from following his thirst for a new thrill.

Yes, it is important that you know all about the dangers of drugs. You need to know, for example, that

crack and the new designer drugs destroy a substance in the brain called "dopamine." This is a body chemical that keeps one from getting depressed; it produces a sense of well-being. When dopamine is not reproduced, depression and paranoia set in. That is why thousands of crack users smoke it night and day — they are trying to reproduce that first incredible high. But, they have destroyed the body's ability to reproduce dopamine, and they are left with ever-increasing depression and fear.

Yet, most of the young people hooked on these drugs know all that. They have been through lectures about the dangers of drugs — they have been bombarded with well-balanced literature about the dangers of misusing chemical substances. It has been no barrier; it has been little, if any, help.

The Bible warns: "They are...proud, boastful, inventors of evil things...disobedient to parents...and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they do not only do the same, but also give healthy approval to those who practice them" (Romans 1:30-32).

Who knows more about the dangers of drugs than doctors? Yet hundreds of doctors are becoming addicts; some of them are out on the streets now, having lost their practices, their families, and their dignity. Knowledge is supposed to preserve. The entire book of Proverbs is an admonition to seek wisdom and knowledge. But that is the "knowledge of the holy" (Proverbs 30:3), because the wisdom of this world is folly — it only puffs one up in pride (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Once the mind is set on experimentation and thrills knowing the dangers won't stop anybody! The Bible says such a person would not listen to reason though seven men warned them. "The sluggard [lazy one] is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason..." (Proverbs 26:16). How cool, how smart they are — each one thinking they are different than all the others. No one really believes he will go all the way.

The First Encounter With the Forbidden Is the Most Dangerous! It is dangerous because, with but a few exceptions, it works! You can breeze right through it without any apparent harm to anybody. You escape with memories of ecstasy, thrills and tremendous pleasure.

So it was with Samson! He had his fling with the harlot, looked out the window and saw trouble. The enemy had surrounded the harlot's house and they planned to wait till morning and kill him. He was trapped.

But somehow Samson escaped. "And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill..." (Judges 16:3).

What about the next day — the day after the first high? Aren't there supposed to be regrets? What is there to regret? Look at Samson the next day. He didn't fall dead under divine judgment. His godly parents didn't know; and what they didn't know wouldn't hurt them, so he must have thought. It seemed like God looked the other way. God even gave him a burst of strength to tear down the devil's gates.

Picture Samson, at midnight, after the forbidden trip — lugging the devil's gates up the hill, thinking to himself, "I'll show the devil he didn't trap me. He can't get a hold on me and make me a prisoner to a harlot! I'll just walk away and go back to my God and forget this little episode! No harm done! It's a one-time thing!"

The Bible says: "Because sentence [judgment] against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil..." (Ecclesiastes 8:11). Sometimes, a first time user of drugs will overdose and die. But most of the time, there is no apparent judgment. No cops! No suspicious parents. No apparent damage to the brain. It is then that the devil comes as an angel of light — with his big lie! He convinces his victims to try it just one more time! He relaxes the conscience.

At this point, a terrible thing is happening. The mind is being programmed! The Bible calls it fully set! It means — confirmed, fully determined to try again. David wrote, "Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; there is no fear of God before his eyes, for it flatters him in his own eyes, concerning the discovery of his iniquity and the hatred of it. The words of his mouth are wickedness and deceit; he has ceased to be wise and to do good. He plans wickedness upon his bed; he sets himself on a path that is not good; he does not despise evil" (Psalm 36:1–4 NAS).

What is meant is this: One who is determined to go back and do it again flatters himself that he will not be discovered. He loses all fear and hatred of his particular sin. Rather than the forbidden sin being a feared and hated thing, it becomes an idol that blinds reality. "He plans wickedness upon his bed — he is now set on the downhill road to bondage and prison — he no longer hates what is evil."

All sense of danger is gone. So what if Elvis Presley overdosed? So what if famous athletes are dropping dead from drugs? So what if teenagers are going mad on crack and murdering parents? So what if thousands of high school and college students are robbing, mugging, stealing and prostituting to support overwhelming habits? So what if the jails are crowded with young junkies? So what if they are being murdered in crack dens? They are now so deceived by Satan, they can plan all night how to get high again! They are deceived into thinking they are special! They will keep on escaping. God will overlook their experimenting.

Those Who Set Themselves to Do Evil Are Soon Possessed and Driven by Demonic Powers! Satan's goal is to break down your strength, all your spiritual and physical resistance, and enslave you. He plans to make you into a slave — a prisoner.

It happened just that way to Samson. He went out one night just to try it "One more time." The harlot's name was Delilah, which in Hebrew means, "Slacken up; loosen up; to come under bondage; to become empty, dry, emaciated."

She embodied demonic lust, a tool of Satan to get Samson to let go and give himself over to her power. "Entice him, and see where his great strength lies and how we may overpower him that we may bind him to afflict him..." (Judges 16:5). Oh that young people could see and understand that Satan is determined to tear them down — to possess them — only so he can afflict them.

Three times Samson went back to a demon — possessed woman he knew was trying to destroy him! She kept begging, "Tell me where your great strength is and how you may be bound to afflict you" (Judges 16:6,10,13). Why did he keep going back to flirt with such danger? Because he couldn't help it now. He was not in control — the devil was driving him to go back, go further, deeper. Each time he escaped, he was strangely driven back into the arms of death. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness" (Proverbs 14:32).

Jeremiah prophesied, "In my house have I found wickedness, saith the Lord. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein..."

(Jeremiah 23:11–12).

He said of backslidden Israel: "Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away..." (Jeremiah 50:17). Satan is the roaring lion who is driving multitudes into bondage. He is so bold, he does not even hide his purposes. Flat out, through Delilah, he was saying to Samson, "I plan to sap your strength, bind you and make a fool of you!"

Before the devil can shut you up in his prison-house, there comes an hour of truth. It is the vexing hour! Satan's last barrier to complete power over you is to win your heart! He wants you to hold nothing back from him — no lingering thoughts of truth and righteousness. He must wring out of you the last hope in God.

Samson reached his vexing hour! "Then she said to him, How can you say, I love you, when your heart is not with me? You have deceived me these three times and have not told me where your great strength lies...and it came about when she pressed him daily and urged him...that his soul was vexed to death...So he told her all that was in his heart" (Judges 16:15–17).

Samson gave his whole heart to Delilah! He was now in her power, body and soul! Satan had all of him. He gave up and laid down to sleep in the devil's lap.

He could have run! He should have stood up, called on God for help, and said to that devil woman: "No! Never! I am different — I belong to God! I don't belong here. Enough is enough! If I give you my heart, it's all over! My last hope is to keep my secret of power!"

Young people, keep your heart yearning for Jesus! God will send all the forces of heaven to rescue a heart that cries out for help. A heart reaching out to the Lord is your last hope! Jesus is the One who sowed His Word in your heart; don't let the wicked one snatch it away! Jesus said the first and great commandment is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind..." (Matthew 22:32).

Once You Are Locked Up In Satan's Prison-House, The Only Way Out Is To Die! What a sad ending for Samson. He didn't even know that God left him. "They took him and put his eyes out!" (Judges 16:21). Samson had his eyes gouged out by the enemy. He could no longer see anything! He couldn't see himself, what sin had done to him. He couldn't see where he was going. He was at the mercy of the devil.

He was once a mighty man of God, full of hope, strength, led by the Spirit. Now look at him — blind and helpless! What a vivid picture of what Satan is doing to this generation. He is robbing them of their spiritual sight. He is blinding them to the dangers. He is blinding them about their condition.

Discernment is the first thing you lose when you forsake the Lord in your heart. You can't see how hopeless and bound you are.

Call for Samson, That He May Amuse Us. The devil made fun of Samson in his blindness! "Now the lords of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god, and to rejoice, for they said 'Our god has given Samson our enemy into our hands.' When the people saw him, they praised their god, for they said 'Our god has given our enemy into our hands, even the destroyer of our country, who has slain many of us.' It so happened when they were in high spirits, that they said, 'Call for Samson, that he may amuse us.' So they called for Samson from the prison, and he

entertained them. And they made him stand between the pillars" (Judges 16:23–25 NAS).

Every addict, every one hooked and enslaved is an object of mockery and amusement to the devil and all his evil hordes. Demons laugh, the powers of darkness sneer and make fun of all the young people now fighting for their lives because of a habit.

Fun? Thrills? Parties? Good times? Take another look at Samson — and learn from it! Listen to the taunts and mockery of those demonic lords: "Look at him — blind, dumb, fool! He has no eyes in his head! Slave! Amusing!"

That's how it all ends, young people! With Satan afflicting you with depression, fear, sickness, loneliness. Then when you are hooked and bound, he makes sport of you. He laughs at God when he sees your pitiful condition. He says, "God has no power — look what I did to him or to her! I turned a child of God into a weak, helpless prisoner."

But there is a way out of Satan's prison-house! You must die! "Then Samson called to the Lord and said, 'O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me just this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.' And Samson grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and braced himself against them, the one with his right hand and the other with his left. And Samson said, 'Let me die with the Philistines!' And he bent with all his might so that the house fell on the lords and all the people who were in it. So the dead who he killed at his death were more than those whom he killed in his life" (Judges 16:28–30 NAS).

You Must Die! Thousands upon thousands of drug addict, alcoholics, and otherwise helpless youth are escaping from the devil's prison-house. They are running to Jesus Christ — dying to sin — and they are being resurrected to new life in Him. "But someone will say, How are the dead raised' And with what kind of body do they come' You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies" (1 Corinthians 15:35,36 NAS).

You must die to your habit! It won't die — you must! "For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He live to God. Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:5–11 NAS).

You must be convinced that Jesus came to set all prisoners free! Are you in Satan's prison-house? Then hear what His ministry is:

"Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people...that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves" (Isaiah 49:8–9 KJV).

"This will be written for the generation to come; that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord. For He looked down from His holy height; from heaven the Lord gazed upon the earth, to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to set free those who were doomed to death" (Psalm 102:19–20 NAS).

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