

# Can *This* Man Change?

*"I have lots of power."*

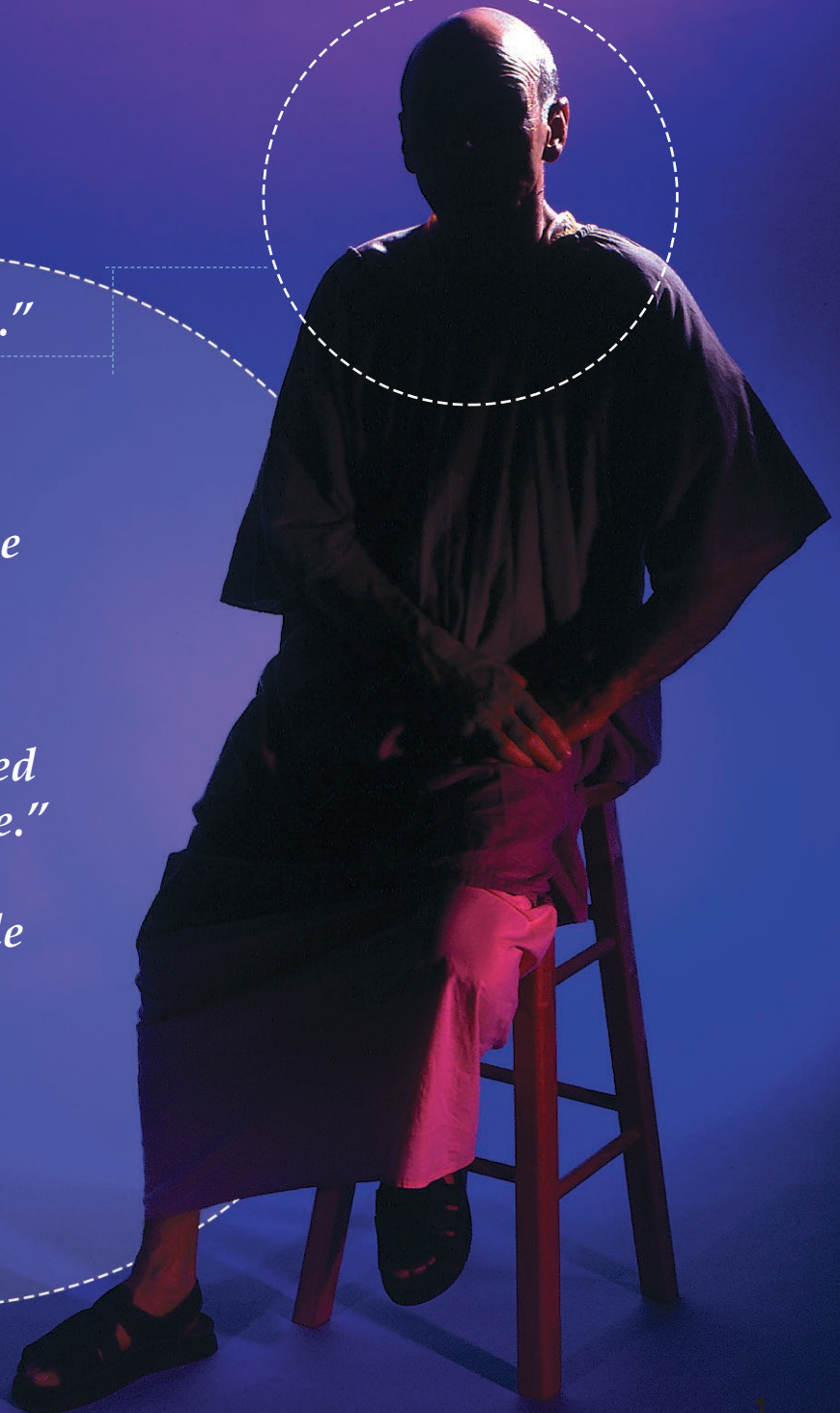
*"I'm always right."*

*"I look down on those  
who don't live my  
way."*

*"I have people arrested  
who disagree with me."*

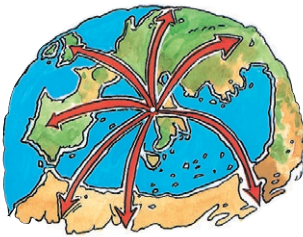
*"I've had many people  
killed."*

*"I hate Jesus."*





# THE SHAKE-UP



<sup>1</sup>In Paul's time, the Roman Empire stretched from Arabia to the British Isles.

In the days of the early church, the Romans<sup>1</sup> ruled much of the world. The

Romans later would oppose the Christians and try to get rid of them. When Paul<sup>2</sup> and Silas were in Philippi, they were beaten and thrown into jail for preaching about Jesus. They were put into the inner cell and their feet were put in stocks.<sup>3</sup>

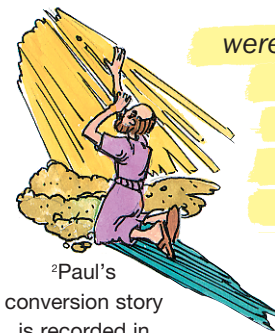
**Read Acts 16:25. How did Paul and Silas spend their time in jail? How do you think you would have spent your time if you were in this jail? Why were they able to remain so positive despite their troubles?**



**Acts 16:26-28, 32-34**

Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake

that the foundations of the prison



<sup>2</sup>Paul's conversion story is recorded in Acts 9.

were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill

himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.<sup>4</sup> But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"



<sup>3</sup>The prison doors were fastened by wooden bars, and the prisoners were chained to the wall or put in stocks.

**Read Acts 16:29-31. What was the jailer's question? Why do you think the jailer asked this question? How did Paul answer? How would you have answered? What did the jailer need to believe about Jesus?**

Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the

<sup>4</sup>Under Roman law escaped prisoners and their jailer would be executed. Suicide was considered by Romans a more honorable way to die.





others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

**Why do you think the jailer took Paul and Silas to his home? What**

**did the jailer do to show he was a changed man? Why was the jailer no longer afraid of being executed?**

The jailer and his entire household believed in Jesus as their Savior and were baptized that very night. The next morning, the magistrates<sup>5</sup> freed Paul and Silas. The jailer had changed from a man who was ready to take his own life to one who had found a new reason to live—Jesus.

<sup>5</sup>Magistrates were the highest government officials in a Roman colony.



# TRUE BELIEVERS

When people believe in Jesus, their lives are changed forever—no matter what their ages or backgrounds are. Here are the stories of three people who came to Jesus—one as a child, one as a teenager, and one as an adult.

**Carol's** parents were missionaries to an Indian tribe in the jungles of Brazil. Carol made friends with the Indian children and soon was learning their language as well. One afternoon Carol's dad used a flannelgraph to tell the people the story of Christ. As her dad talked, Carol could understand some of what he was saying in the *Boneewa* language. At that moment, Carol realized that Jesus died for her. There, in the quietness of that far away jungle, Carol believed in Jesus.

## KEY VERSE

"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

Acts 16:31

**LaQuandra**, a college freshman, began hanging with a bad crowd and using drugs and alcohol. When her parents found out, they tried to help, but LaQuandra wouldn't listen. Taiyon, a friend from home, noticing the dramatic change in LaQuandra, told her about Jesus and invited her to church. LaQuandra hesitated, but went.

The preacher's sermon—The Prodigal Son—touched LaQuandra's heart. Tears streamed down her cheeks. Realizing her own sin, she confessed, "I want Christ to be the ruler in my life." She began speaking openly about Jesus, praying, reading the Bible, and attending church. LaQuandra became a true believer because she allowed Christ to be the ruler in her life, not drugs and alcohol.

**George** had gone to church all his life and had even taught Sunday school. When George and his wife moved, they attended a new church, and soon decided to become members. Each new person had to tell how they came to believe in Jesus. Then it hit George—he had never trusted Jesus as his Savior. George talked to the pastor, and the pastor simply explained to George what believing in Jesus was all about. Right then and there, George trusted Jesus. Even as an adult in his forties, George knew that he needed Jesus.