

# Days of Al Capone

The name Al Capone conjures up images of crime, gangsters terrorizing a city, and Scarface himself beating three of his wayward subordinates to death with a baseball bat.

But that view of Capone was not always the case.

During the 1920s, many people viewed Capone as a respected citizen, a sort of Robin Hood. In 1930, students at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism were asked to name "the most outstanding personages of the world." Capone made the list, along with George Bernard Shaw, Mahatma Gandhi and Albert Einstein.

But Capone's days of power and prestige as the leader of a Prohibition-era crime syndicate were short-lived.

The Chicago Outfit, which subsequently became known as "The Capones," was dedicated to smuggling and bootlegging liquor, and other illegal activities such as prostitution, in Chicago from the early 1920s to 1931.

In 1931, Capone attended a football game at Northwestern University. In years past when he attended sporting events, he often was saluted by fans. But this time he was booed out of the stands and left the stadium in humiliation.



That year, after only six years as mob boss in Chicago, Capone was convicted of income tax evasion. He ended up in Alcatraz. Eight years later when he was released from prison, he was suffering from the advanced stages of syphilis. He lived as a recluse, dying in 1947.

During his time in Alcatraz, Capone worked in the prison shoe shop and shared a cell with a convict who worked on the prison newspaper. Capone told his cellmate one evening, "I'm supposed to be a big shot and I've wound up in the shoe shop; you're supposed to be a safecracker and now you write editorials. What kind of a screwed-up, lousy world is this?"

To answer that question: This world is a place where those who violate God's laws may flourish for a season, but their days are numbered. Sooner or later, on this earth or at the great judgment seat, evildoers will pay for their evil deeds.

On the other hand, people who love God and obey Him, including accepting His Son, can expect a reward for their faithfulness.

*Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him (James 1:12).*