

THE ROMAN SOLDIER

“Lent, A Monologue”



*“If you confess with your mouth,
‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your
heart that God raised him from the
dead, you will be saved.”*

Romans 10:9

“It must be known to all of you that a soldier does what he is commanded to do, particularly a Roman soldier. I was with John, who preached about Christ’s coming when some of us as soldiers asked what we should do when people wronged us. He had been telling people to do violence to no one, to never falsely accuse someone, and to be content with our wages. That’s sometimes easier said than done.

“I had been hearing a lot about Jesus from many people. And, I was still unsure as to whether or not I believed what he was saying. I had done a lot of thinking and wanted to believe him,, but I also doubted. Then one evening, we were called to go to the Garden of Gethsemane to seek out this man called Jesus. One of Jesus’ own men had decided to turn him over for thirty pieces of silver. The high priests and religious leaders were anxious to get him out of their way because it was near time for the Passover Feast, and they did not want any trouble with the crowds of people that would be in town. They felt that Jesus was one that could cause that trouble. We arrived with lanterns, torches and swords. Jesus asked whom we had come to see. One of the other soldiers said ‘Jesus, the Nazarene’. Jesus admitted that he was the one we sought.

“At this point, I became a believer. Who would openly and so freely admit that he was the one being sought for death if he were not? But, what could I

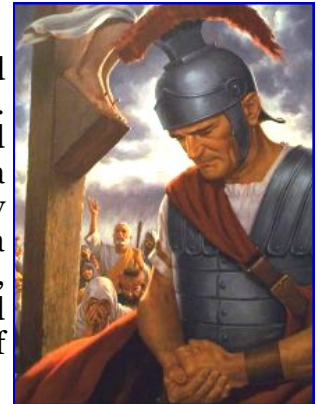
“And the soldiers
platted a crown of
thorns, and put it
on his head, and
they put on him a
purple robe,”

John 19:2

and delivered him to Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, the Chief Priest. From there we took him to the Jewish Council and then to Pilate. I personally did not want to harm him in any way. But, I had to do what I was told.

“Pilate asked him if he was the King of the Jews. Christ said ‘If you say so.’ There was a storm of negative comments, and I knew that Pilate also had some doubts about Jesus’ being a criminal. I felt that Pilate thought they had only brought Jesus to him for spite because they could not control this gentle man who caused no trouble, but was followed everywhere he went by people who believed he was their Messiah, and people who were loyal to the Roman government and were trying in every way to trick him up so they could get rid of him..

“The crowds would not release Christ. He was whipped and dressed in a purple robe. They beat him with a club, spit on him, mocked him and then put a crown of thorns on his head.



“We took Christ to Golgotha to be crucified; he offered no resistance. I stood by and said nothing. I know I was a coward. One soldier pierced his side with a sword. Another took his clothes and divided them up four ways, but his robe was seamless. They decided to throw dice for it; all this at the foot of the cross where Jesus who was my Lord and Savior died. I have often wondered what I should have done differently. I heard him forgive those who had wronged him. I heard him ask for forgiveness for his enemies. I heard him say that we didn’t know what we were doing, and I believed him. I know that he has forgiven me and I will spend Eternity with my Lord.”

The actions of the soldiers before they took Christ to Golgotha are recorded in Matthew. THE MESSAGE states it this way in modern day language.

“The soldiers assigned to the governor took Jesus into the governor’s palace and got the entire brigade together for some fun. They stripped him and dressed him in a red toga. They plaited a crown from branches of a thorn-bush and set it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand for a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mocking reverence: “Bravo, King of the Jews!” they said. “Bravo!” Then they spit on him and hit him on the head with the stick. When they had had their fun, they took off the toga and put his own clothes back on him. Then they proceeded out to the crucifixion.”

Matthew 27: 27-31

Matthew also records what the soldiers were doing during the time Christ was hanging on the cross.

“After they had finished nailing him to the cross and were waiting for him to die, they whiled away the time by throwing dice for his clothes. Above his head they had posted the criminal charge against him: this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.” Matthew 27: 35-37

“People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament: “You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days—so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you’re really God’s Son, come down from that cross!”
Matthew 27: 39-41

Most information on the part of a Roman soldier in the crucifixion is based on what has been passed on. It may be true, it may not be. The only references to the soldiers at the time of the crucifixion are found in Matthew 8:9, Matthew 27:27; Matthew 28:12 and in Mark 15:16; Luke 3:4; and Luke 7:8; Luke 23:36, and in John 19:2-34.

A play called “Were You There” by Raymond Keffer has a Roman Soldier in it who according to some legends had pierced the side of Christ. Legend says that some of the blood of Christ fell on his face and the problem in one eye which he had from birth was healed and he believed. The soldier is traditionally revered as a saint in some churches and even his lance is revered! When questioned, Keffer said he did not believe this, but it was an interesting bit of fiction to show how often we forget the real meaning of the Scripture, and need to romanticize it as has been done with much of Scripture.

Roman Soldier: When I washed His blood off my face, my eye which had been badly crossed since birth, was normal.... The scars on my face were healed.... (Looking upward) I was whole. (Pause, reflect) How could an ORDINARY man's blood do that? (Joyfully) He had to be the Messiah! I have no doubts now, He was the Messiah. I believe it. (Pause) If a thief can be forgiven on the cross and be with Jesus today in Paradise, then a Roman soldier who was healed with His blood will be with Jesus also. (Regains composure) Ahhhh, I must be going. I've got to get back to my barracks. I have a report to fill out. Duty calls.

Prayer: Amazing God who forgives those who sin, those who seek, and those who don't realize what they are doing wrong, we know that you will also forgive us for our sins if we only ask. Dear Lord, please come into our lives and guide us today and every day. Amen

1. Are we ever called on to forgive someone who has taken advantage of us or mistreated us either emotionally or physically?
2. Do we ever need to forgive someone who tells lies about us?
3. Why would the soldiers have cast lots for the clothing of Christ?
4. Do we ever put too much emphasis on clothing? Would people do that today? Why?
5. *“If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you--you of little faith?”* Matthew 6:30.
6. What kind of clothing does this refer to?
7. Are we clothed by Christ?

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