



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A Government Leader was the First to Believe!

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 18, 2012

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Matthew 27:54-56

“Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’ 55) And many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, 56) among whom was Mary Magdalene, along with Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.” (NASB)

“THE FAITH OF THE SOLDIERS IS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE, AND WAS ESPECIALLY SO IN THE EARLY CHURCH. THEIR TESTIMONY WAS, AS IT WERE, JESUS’ OWN FINAL TESTIMONY FROM THE CROSS.”

JOHN MACARTHUR

Why is this centurion and his men the only people to believe after Jesus dies upon the cross? How did the Jewish people interpret Jesus’ death on the cross and how did they respond? Who are the only ones brave enough to be with Jesus as He is executed? Are any of these women relatives of Jesus? Is there an emphasis on leaders after Jesus’ death upon the cross?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- > APRIL 25-27: MATTHEW 27:57-61 **JESUS IS BURIED BY LEGISLATORS!**
- > MAY 2-4: MATTHEW 27:62-66 **THE SINISTER LEADERS SECURE THE TOMB**

The entire book of Matthew is written to continue to prove the fact that Jesus is the Messiah, the God-Man. Through the miraculous virgin birth He is proven to be “Immanuel,” meaning “God with us” (Mt. 1:23). The supernatural star guided the wise men to the one “born King of the Jews” (Mt. 2:2). At His baptism, God the

Father declared from heaven, “*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased*” (Mt. 3:17). Satan used His deity to tempt Him in the wilderness, “*If You are the Son of God*” (Mt. 4:3, 6). As Jesus’ divinity was proven through His many miracles, even the demons cried out, “*What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?*” (Mt. 8:29) When He came walking on the water in the storm and the wind stopped as He got in the boat, the disciples worshipped Him saying, “*You are certainly God’s Son!*” (Mt. 14:33) Peter gave the great declaration upon which the Church would be built, “*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (Mt. 16:16). At the transfiguration the Father commanded them, “*This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!*” (Mt. 17:5) At His unlawful, unjust trial by the Sanhedrin, the high priest acquired His false accusation of blasphemy by self-incrimination when he demanded, “*I adjure you by the living God, that you tell us whether you are the Christ, the Son of God*” (Mt. 26:63). Even as Jesus was hanging on the cross, their ridicule of Jesus mocked the same supernatural claim, “*If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross*” and even quoting Scripture, “**HE TRUSTS IN GOD; LET HIM DELIVER Him now, IF HE TAKES PLEASURE IN HIM; for He said, ‘I am the Son of God’**” (Mt. 27:40, 43). The foundation of faith in the book of Matthew is built upon the great reality that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God!

“JESUS HAD SAID: ‘I, WHEN I AM LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL PEOPLE TO MYSELF’ (JOHN 12:32). HE FORETOLD THE MAGNETIC POWER OF THE CROSS; AND THE CENTURION WAS ITS FIRST FRUIT.”

WILLIAM BARCLAY

I. LEADERSHIP IN FAITH MT. 27:54

No doubt the centurion had been among the other five centurions which led the cohort of 600 Roman soldiers

BIBLE STUDIES

WEDNESDAY @ 8:00AM – BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR WEST CONFERENCE ROOM

NEXT WEEK SATELLITE BIBLE STUDIES BEGIN IN FREDERICKSBURG, NEAR DC, CHESTERFIELD, RICHMOND, AND NORFOLK

Virginia

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to arrest Jesus in the garden and had fallen down when Jesus said, “*I AM He*” (Jn. 18:3, 6). He had most likely witnessed much of the trial, the false accusations and illegal maneuvering of the Jewish leaders. He would have heard Jesus affirm to Pilate that He was “*the King of the Jews*” (Mt. 27:11) and watched Him amaze the Governor as He remained silent in the face of every charge leveled against Him. Upon hearing Pilate rebuke the Jewish leaders, saying that neither he nor Herod had found any fault in Jesus (Lk. 23:14-15), he would have watched with disgust, Pilate’s capitulation to the will of the people in their screaming, “*Crucify, crucify Him!*” (Lk. 23:21) He would have joined the leaders of the “*Roman cohort*” who had mocked Jesus with the scarlet robe and the crown of thorns, kneeling before Him saying, “*Hail, King of the Jews!*” Probably his spittle had been mixed with the other soldiers’ upon Jesus’ face and his hand had taken the reed to beat the crown of thorns into His brow (Mt. 27:27-31). He had been chosen to lead the execution and had joined the Jews in mocking Jesus as he hung upon the cross (Lk. 23:36-37), in fact Edersheim suggests that this man gave Luke most of his information on the crucifixion.¹ He was standing right in front of Jesus when He died and “*saw the way He breathed His last*” and said, “*Truly this man was the Son of God*” (Mk. 15:39). Feeling the earthquake and summarizing all that has occurred, he leads his men in the recognition of Christ and into eternal life! (I Jn. 4:15)

“HE CERTAINLY REGARDED THESE WONDERS AS PROOF THAT HE WAS WHAT HE PROFESSED TO BE.”

ALBERT BARNES

II. LOOKING IN FAITHFULNESS MT. 27:55-56

Though the centurion and his men make their declaration in full assurance, there were many women at the cross,

who were confused and “*looking on from a distance.*” This verb for “*looking*” is in the continual present tense and it “is used for one who looks at a thing with interest and for a purpose, usually indicating careful observation of the details.”² Initially they had been near the cross (Jn. 19:25-27), but now they seem to have withdrawn as they are devastated in watching His continual suffering. Their grief was overwhelming and their hopes shattered as they continued with courage at the cross. They have followed Him since His early days of ministry in Galilee and were faithfully “*ministering to Him.*” The verb for “*ministering*” is also continual and it is used to describe the work of a deacon or deaconess as they “serve” in the Church. Probably most of the meals for Christ and His disciples had been provided and prepared by these women (Lk. 8:2-3), the first of whom Jesus had cast out seven demons. The second and third women are most likely aunts of our Lord whose sons are both cousins and are included as five of the disciples.³ While their sons (but one) are absent in fear, these women stay to the end!

“ONLY THEY AND THE ANGELS (MATTHEW 4:11, MARK 1:13) ARE SAID TO MINISTER TO JESUS!”

JOHN MACARTHUR

III. LEAVING IN FAITHLESSNESS LUKE 23:48

After witnessing the darkness, the loud final declarations of Christ, the roar of the veil as it was rent from top to bottom, the earthquake, the splitting of the rocks and graves opening all around them, “*all the multitudes who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts.*” Yet their mourning was not godly sorrow (II Cor. 7:10).

¹ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), 595 & 612.

² W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 60.

³ Edersheim, 602-603.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Do you lead others in a recognition of Jesus Christ and into eternal life?
- 2) Are you willing to gladly serve when unrecognized and unnoticed for the most part?
- 3) Is your sorrow over your sin a godly sorrow that works repentance and salvation or only a worldly sorrow like Judas’?