

How Do I Fight Fairly in an Unfair Fight?

Acts 27:1-3

August 27, 2023

The Holy Spirit says, in effect, “Look at the centurion.”

Led by example

Backbone of the Roman army

Commanded respect wherever he went

Fourth in line from Roman emperor

Admired for bravery and courage

Wealthy

Enjoyed a prosperous retirement

Cultural hero

There are at least ten distinct centurion encounters in NT; we are given the names of at least two of them (Cornelius, Julius).

1. Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23 The centurion at the crucifixion. *“Truly this was the Son of God!”*; *“Certainly this was a righteous Man!”*

This centurion pronounced Jesus dead; so, at the cross, Jesus was glorified as being the righteous Son of God, and was pronounced dead, by a gentile military man. He was dead.

2. Luke 7; Matthew 8 The centurion whose servant Jesus healed. “He is worthy for You to grant this to him; for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.” “I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.”

3. Acts 10 Cornelius. 1 Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, 2 a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually.

4. Acts 21:32 Centurions saved Paul from being beat to death by the Jews at the temple.

5. Acts 22:25,26 A centurion helped intercede for Paul and prevented him from being flogged, possibly to death.

6. Acts 23:16-18 A centurion “took orders” from Paul and ultimately this spared Paul’s life.

7 and 8. Acts 23:23 Two centurions oversee Paul’s deliverance from Jerusalem to Caesarea.

9. Acts 24:23 A centurion oversees Paul’s “gentle” custody in Herod’s Praetorium.

10. Acts 27 Julius the centurion protects Paul on the way to Rome, eventually interceding to save Paul’s life.

Point 1:

Consider Luke’s purpose in writing The Gospel of Luke and The Acts of the Apostles. Luke opens his gospel with Simeon saying of the baby Jesus, *A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES*, Luke 2:32, and he closes Acts with Paul saying *“Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will also listen.”* Acts 28:28. It appears that Luke uses the Roman centurion to illustrate the Gentile recognition of, and reception of, the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Also, consider the effect on the culture when an influential group such as the centurions are impacted by the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

Twenty-seven percent of the NT was written by a Gentile (Luke) to a Gentile (Theophilus). (By comparison, Paul wrote 23%, going by Greek word count.)

Point 2:

Every audience to whom the NT was written was acquainted with the Roman centurion. So, the illustration of the spiritual armor in Ephesians 6 found a ready context.

WE don't fight; we stand firm, using spiritual weapons, and HE fights.

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to **stand firm** against the schemes of the devil.

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to **stand firm**.

14 **Stand firm** therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. . .

Ephesians 6