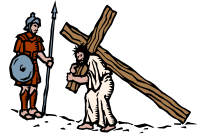


## Preacher's Pen points

# The Centurion's Confession



We know he was a Roman soldier, a man of authority. Beyond that we know nothing about him except that he was the man in charge of the job of seeing that Jesus Christ was crucified. Ironically the man who set his seal on Jesus' guilt by executing Him at last gave his own testimony to His innocence saying, "*Truly this was the Son of God!*" (Mt. 27:54; Lk. 23:47). What did this man witness that caused him to change his mind?

### ***The Centurion Saw Amazing Love***

This unnamed soldier "*stood right in front of Him*" (Mk. 15:39) and witnessed Jesus' amazing response to His execution. He saw unbelievable forgiveness to the perpetrators of the crime: "*Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.*" (Lk. 23:34). He saw Jesus' loving care for His mother. To Mary he heard Jesus say, "*Woman, behold your Son*" and to John "*Son, beyond your mother*" (Jn. 19:26-27). He saw Jesus' meek acceptance of His physical and emotional abuse. Though He cried out, "*I thirst*" (Jn. 19:28), there were never curses upon those who made Him thirsty. Though he plaintively asked, "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*", there were no angry tirades against the heavens for His mistreatment. Surely the unnamed centurion must have been impressed with the determined sense of accomplishment that Jesus revealed in His statement, "*It is finished*" and His dependence upon God in His last breath, "*Father, into your hands I commit my spirit*" (Lk. 23:46). It was seeing these things that caused the centurion to know that Jesus was no ordinary man, no common criminal. However, the Scripture indicates that the centurion saw much more.

### ***The Centurion Saw Miraculous Events***

The centurion not only witnessed the way Jesus died, he also saw the response of heaven to His death. It was as if God sent His own message in the miraculous events of that day. For example, an unexplained darkness hovering for hours over the scene of the crime (Lk. 23:44-45) and a great earthquake, rending the boulders of Golgotha asunder, revealed God's disapproval of that evil moment. And, in other places and times, amazing signs were also signaling a new age. Many dead saints were raised and appeared to many, indicating that victory over death had been secured. And, the temple curtain was ripped in two, indicating that the way into the presence of God had now been made possible (Mt. 27:51-53).

### ***An Inescapable Conclusion!***

The Scripture affirms that it was "*seeing these things*" (Mk. 15:39) that prompted the centurion's changed view of Jesus. Consequently, he confessed both Jesus' innocence and His deity. Moreover, so impressive was the evidence, that those who stood with him also acknowledged the truth of His observation (Mt. 27:54).

I'd like to believe that the confession the centurion made that day was the beginning of a new life of discipleship. Whether he followed up on his confession we cannot say; but this much is clear. A Roman centurion who had been assigned the job of crucifying Jesus would have had no reason to believe in Him as God; but the evidence could not be denied! In a matter of hours his mind had been changed and His mouth moved to confess Jesus as God. How about you?! Have you made the good confession? —Johnny Felker