

A SOLDIER'S WAY

"A good soldier" II Timothy 2:3

SOLDIERS IN SCRIPTURE

Although there were plenty of warriors and battles in the Old Testament, almost every appearance of the word soldier/soldiers in Scripture is found in the New Testament. That is not surprising since in the era when and in the lands where the New Testament unfolded, Rome ruled absolutely. And Roman soldiers were ubiquitous. They were the symbol of the empire's authority and also its ever present enforcers. You get an elevated sense of the pervasiveness of their presence by the mentions of the word centurion, which identified Roman soldiers with the rank of captain. These were officers with command of 100 men.

PAUL OBSERVED THOSE ROMAN SOLDIERS

It was hard for Paul and his fellow travelers to go anywhere without finding Roman soldiers already there. So it is not surprising that he pondered the characteristics that marked a good soldier. Characteristics which include, but are not limited to:

- Masterful use of the weapons of war
- Loyalty to their cause above all other considerations
- Respect for the chain of command
- Unquestioned obedience to orders

After assessing the attributes present in a good soldier in the natural world, Paul then contemplated how those lessons transferred to a spiritual soldier. A quick review of the short list above makes it is easy to comprehend the appropriate applications to the spiritual realm.

PAUL TO TIMOTHY ON SOLDIERS

In his exhortation to his spiritual son and fellow Gospel soldier Timothy, Paul used a soldier analogy to emphasize a couple of points (II Timothy 2:3-4). He focused on:

- Enduring hardness – A soldier's life is not easy, Perseverance is required.
- Avoiding entanglements – In this life, there is much to distract from the core mission. As soldiers of Christ, we must resist those distractions.
- Pleasing the one who recruited us into His army – The focus must be on Jesus.

In these last days, these are good points to remember and act on as we pray, Lord help us to be good soldiers.