

February 2014

Volume 25:02

# Discovery

*Scripture & Science for Kids*





# The Oldest Profession

DAVE MILLER

## THE BIBLE TEACHES

**THE FIRST JOB ANY HUMAN EVER HAD WAS FARMING. GOD PLACED ADAM IN**

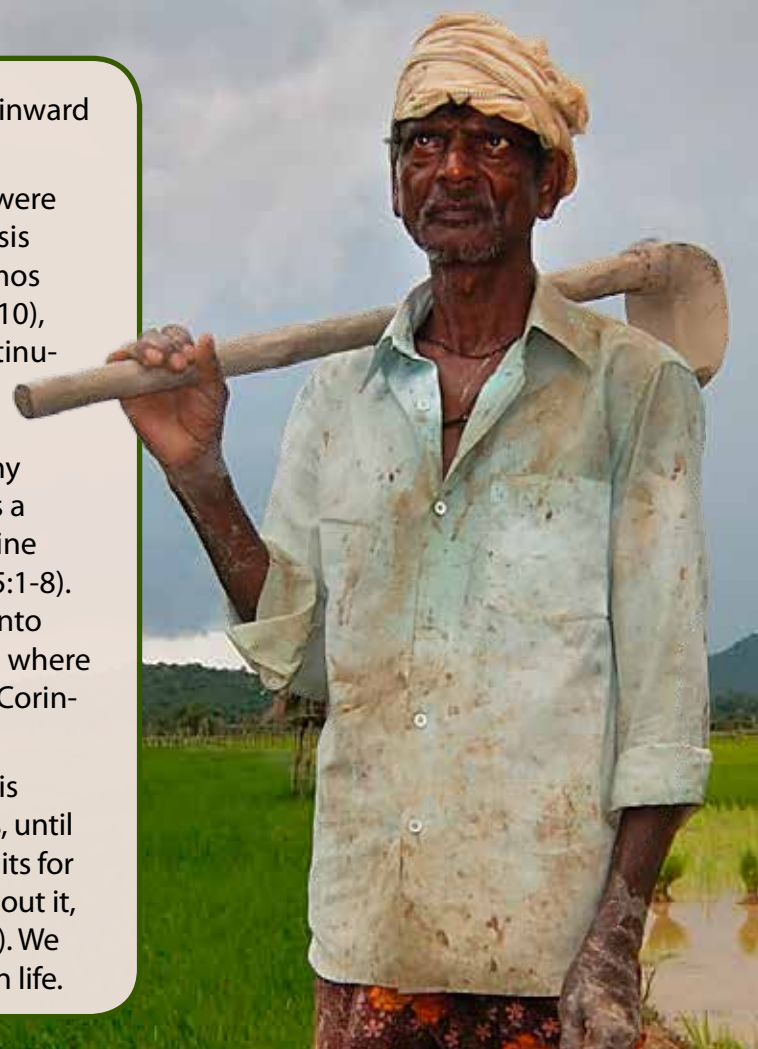
the Garden of Eden to cultivate and tend it (Genesis 2:15). His son, Cain, also became a farmer. Farming has always been a noble profession. For most of American history, people have lived on farms, grown their own food, and used animals to help them farm. Many farmers believe that special blessings come from God through farming. One Christian farmer said: "There is something about being able to be outside, working in the dirt, watching things grow, feeding the animals, and harvesting the fruits of

your labor that seems to fill an inward desire to steward the land."

Many great Bible characters were farmers, including Noah (Genesis 9:20), Elisha (1 Kings 19:19), Amos (7:14), Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:10), and Boaz (Ruth 2:14). God continually blessed His faithful servants who pursued this whole-

some, God-approved profession (Deuteronomy 28:4). God, Himself, is described in the Bible as a Farmer. He is the Vinedresser Who tends the vine branches—those who abide in Christ (John 15:1-8). We must bear fruit so that He will not cast us into the fire. God also farms the field of His church, where He is working to produce a perfect harvest (1 Corinthians 3:5-9).

One important way we are to be like farmers is given by James: "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains" (5:7). We must strive to be patient as we live the Christian life.



# The Work of Scribes

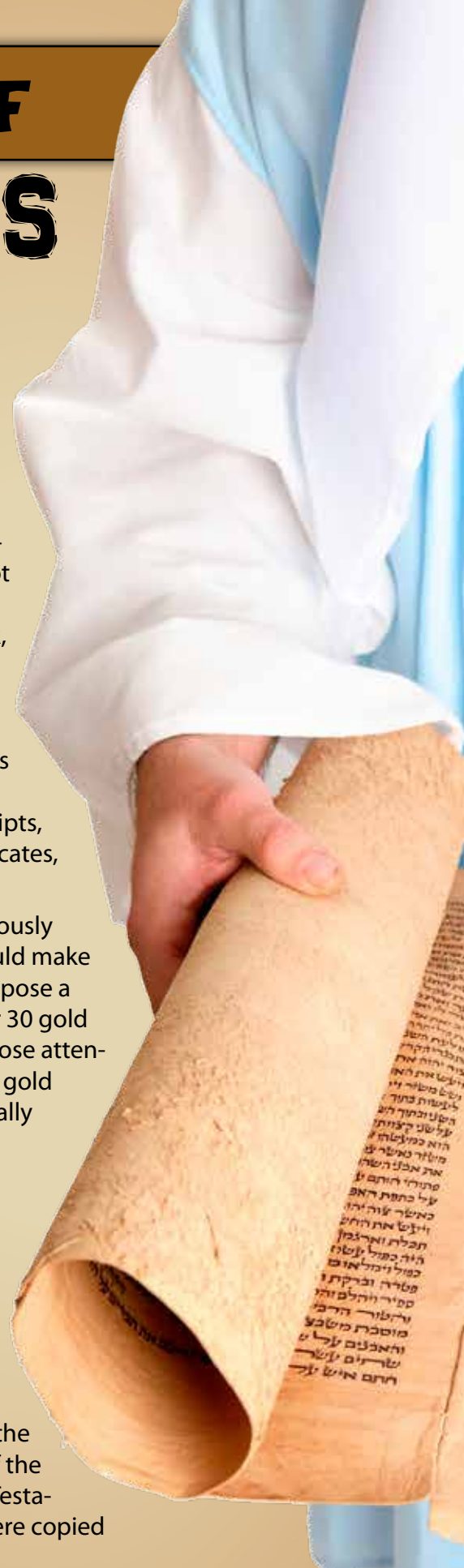
KYLE BUTT

## IN THE NEW TESTAMENT YOU OFTEN READ ABOUT A GROUP OF

people called scribes. What was a scribe? Many years ago, the printing press or the computer had not been invented. Writing was done by hand. If a person wrote a book, how could copies be produced? Someone had to sit down and copy the original by hand. Such a person was called a scribe. Scribes copied almost any type of document imaginable—business receipts, legal documents, marriage certificates, and much more.

Scribes took their jobs very seriously because the slightest mistake could make a big difference. For instance, suppose a person bought a piece of land for 30 gold pieces. If the scribe did not pay close attention to his work, he might write 3 gold pieces or 300 gold pieces, drastically altering the original price.

There was one group of scribes known as the Masoretes whose job was to make copies of the books of the Old Testament. They took their job very seriously. They used special kinds of ink, counted every word, and knew exactly which word and letter should be in the middle of the book they were copying. Many of the copies of both the Old and New Testaments that are available today were copied by scribes.



# Tanners

ERIC LYONS

**A TANNER IS A PERSON WHO WORKS TO TURN ANIMAL SKINS INTO LEATHER. THE ONLY DIRECT REFER-**

ences to a tanner in all of Scripture are found in Acts 9:43 and 10:6,32. This tanner was Simon, who lived in Joppa by the Mediterranean Sea.

If Simon was the only tanner ever mentioned in Scripture, a person might wonder why such a profession is worthy of spotlighting. The reason is because tanners are implied throughout the Bible. They were extremely important to society (though often looked down upon because of the odors that accompany working with dead animals).

Tanners had to "make a covering of ram skins..."

and badger skins" for the tabernacle (Exodus 26:14). They provided leather for millions of sandals and belts that people have worn throughout history (Ezekiel 16:10; Matthew 3:4). The leather for these materials did not just magically appear. A tanner previously had to (1) remove the hide from the dead animal, (2) soak the hide in containers until all of the blood, fat, and animal hair was removed, and then (among other things) (3) dry the skins.

The tanner's work may not have been envied by the masses, but their products were certainly in high demand—and still are!





# SHEPHERDS

KYLE BUTT

## IF YOU HAVE READ THE BIBLE MUCH, YOU KNOW IT OFTEN TALKS ABOUT SHEPHERDS. KING DAVID WAS A

shepherd. When Jesus was born, angels visited the shepherds out in the fields. And Jesus calls Himself the "Good Shepherd" (John 10:11). What was a shepherd?

The easiest answer is that shepherds were people who took care of sheep. But even though that is easy to say, the job was often rather difficult. First, the shepherd had to make sure the sheep had plenty of grass to eat and water to drink. During times of the year when it was dry, shepherds may walk for days leading their sheep to new pastures and streams. Also, shepherds had to protect their sheep from wild animals. They would often use a sling and a staff as protection. In the Old Testament, we read that David killed a lion and a bear that attacked his sheep (1 Samuel 16:34-37). Shepherds were also responsible for keeping their sheep from getting lost, and finding them if they did get lost (see Luke 15:1-7).

Sheep were very important to people in Bible times. They were used as sacrifices to God. Sheep wool was often used to make clothing and blankets. And sheep were a good source of food. The job of a shepherd was sometimes hard, but it could be very rewarding as well.



# FISHERMEN

ERIC LYONS

## MANY PEOPLE FISH

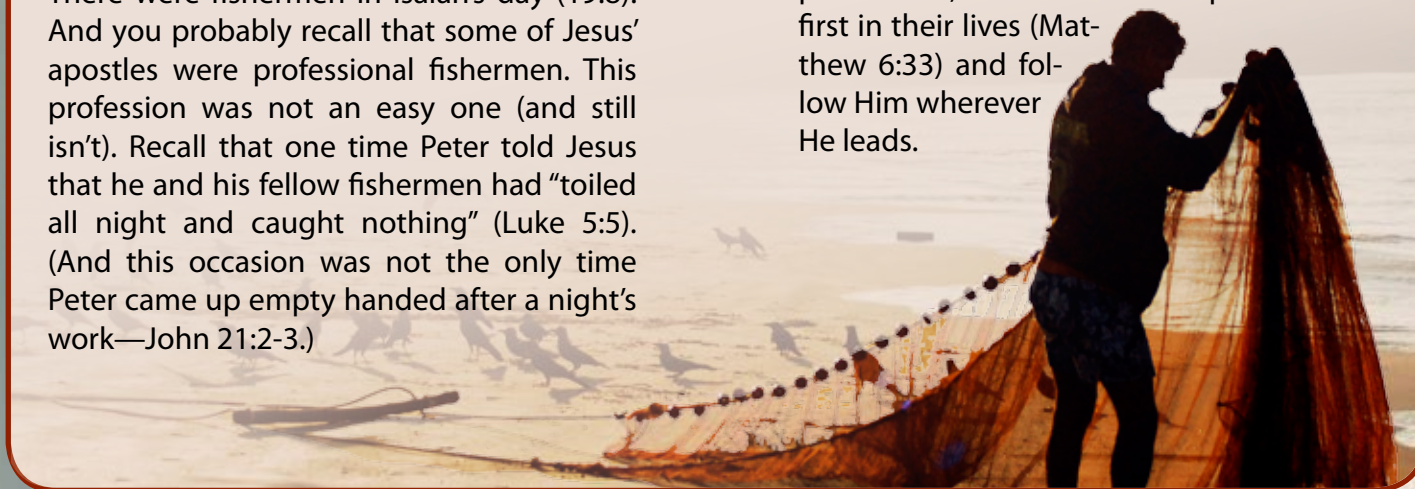
FOR THE FUN OF IT. THEY GET AWAY ON VACATION AND FISH IN LAKES and rivers. They rent charter boats and spend the day deep-sea fishing. They use poles, reels, fishing line, and hooks, and they hope to snag a big trout or salmon, take pictures of them, or tell their friends about "the big one that got away."

Other people around the world, however, fish for their living. That is, for them, fishing is their profession. They fish to live and live to fish.

Fishermen have been around for thousands of years. The Israelites fished when they were slaves in Egypt (Numbers 11:5). There were fishermen in Isaiah's day (19:8). And you probably recall that some of Jesus' apostles were professional fishermen. This profession was not an easy one (and still isn't). Recall that one time Peter told Jesus that he and his fellow fishermen had "toiled all night and caught nothing" (Luke 5:5). (And this occasion was not the only time Peter came up empty handed after a night's work—John 21:2-3.)

Although the apostles of Christ were familiar with the style of fishing involving a line and hook (as is evident by Jesus telling Peter to "go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first"—Matthew 17:27), it seems they mostly used nets in their work. When Jesus called Peter and Andrew to follow Him, they were in the middle of "casting a net into the sea" (Matthew 4:18), while James and John were in a boat with their father "mending their nets" (4:21). Some nets were smaller (about 15 feet in diameter) and could be used by just one or two fishermen. Other nets, such as dragnets, might be 100 or more feet long and take several fishermen and at least two boats to operate.

As important as the profession of fishing was to Peter, Andrew, James, and John, when the Lord called them to become fishers of men, "they immediately left their nets and followed him" (Matthew 4:20). May God help all Christians today, regardless of their professions, to remember to put the Lord first in their lives (Matthew 6:33) and follow Him wherever He leads.



# CARPENTRY

## IN THE BIBLE

DAVE MILLER

## THE BIBLE MENTIONS

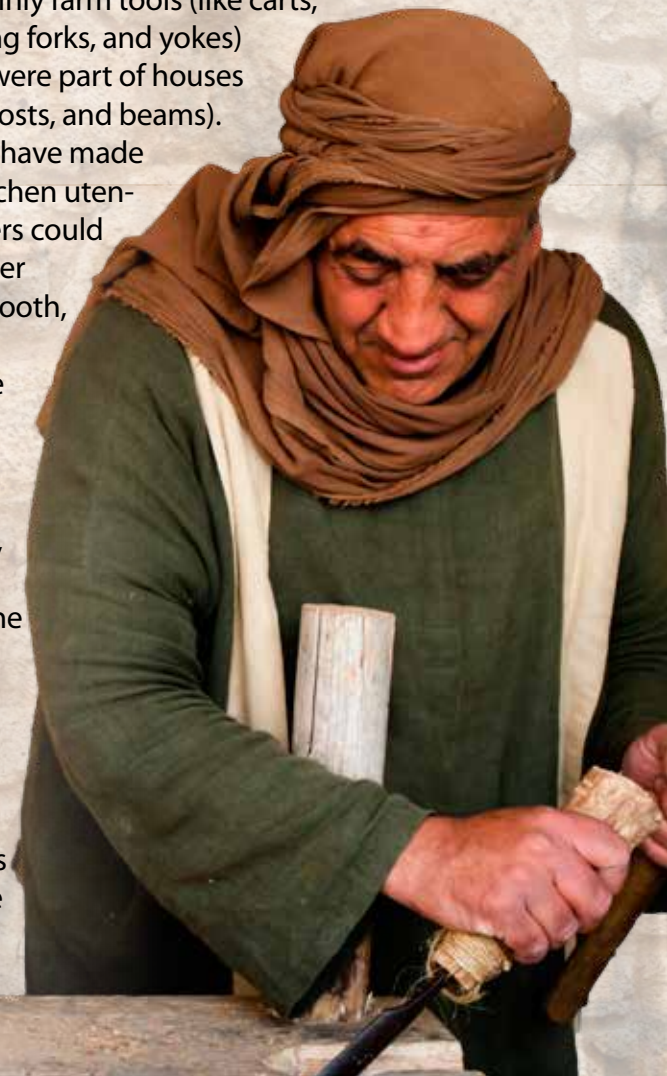
SEVERAL CARPENTERS. NOAH ACTED AS A CARPENTER WHEN HE BUILT THE ARK (GENESIS 6:14).

Bezalel was the carpenter who made the ark of the covenant out of acacia wood (Exodus 37:1). Carpenters were used to build King David's palace (2 Samuel 5:11). Carpenters were used to build the Temple in Solomon's day, and to repair damages to the Temple years later (1 Kings 5:6,18; 2 Kings 12:11; 22:6). And carpenters were used to rebuild the Temple after the Babylonians destroyed it (Ezra 3:7).

Jesus was said to be a carpenter since He was the adopted son of Joseph (Mark 6:3). Carpenters at that time would have created mainly farm tools (like carts, plows, winnowing forks, and yokes) and things that were part of houses (doors, frames, posts, and beams). They also would have made furniture and kitchen utensils. But carpenters could not go to a lumber yard and buy smooth, pre-cut lumber. They would have had to cut down trees and use

tools to chop, chip, and smooth the wood. They would have used axes, hammers, saws, planes, and chisels (1 Samuel 13:20; 1 Kings 6:7; Judges 4:21; Isaiah 10:15; 44:13). Carpentry work was physically challenging, causing the carpenter's body to be sturdy and muscular.

Jesus spent His childhood years being an obedient son, and maybe even working with his adopted father as a carpenter. But as important as it is for all of us to learn a profession so we can earn a living and support our families (Ephesians 4:28), we must remember that our primary job is to live the Christian life. As Jesus explained to His earthly parents: "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49).





# PHYSICIANS

JEFF MILLER

## IN THE FIRST CENTURY, A PERSON COULD CHOOSE TO BECOME A PHYSICIAN (DOCTOR),

just like we can today. But back then, people did not understand nearly as much about the body as we do. Most physicians in the Roman Empire were brought there from Greece, where they were often from noble families and were highly

respected. In the Roman Empire, however, they were not always respected as much, because they were immigrants and usually either slaves or freed slaves. Also, in Bible times, unlike today, no one really checked doctors to make sure they were treating people correctly instead of hurting them more. Many did more harm than good (Mark 5:26), and some doctors even mixed in magic and spells, as though that would help. Add to that the fact that physicians were usually thought to be greedy in charging their patients unfairly high prices to help them, and you understand why they were not always respected.

In spite of that, some physicians were good at healing and helping. Luke, who wrote Luke and Acts, was a physician (Colossians 4:14). In comparison to other inspired writings, his writings are filled with extra information about sicknesses and physical conditions that showed he had studied medicine. Jesus mentioned doctors in a favorable way (Luke 2:17), and in fact, is known to us as the Great Physician (Mark 2:17) Who healed many people that no other physician could ever help.



## TRUE OR FALSE

- \_\_\_ Scribes copied almost any type of document imaginable—business receipts, legal documents, marriage certificates, and much more.
- \_\_\_ Christians are never described as spiritual soldiers who fight the devil and his angels.
- \_\_\_ The idea of “going the extra mile” for someone refers to the times when soldiers or messengers were allowed to make others carry their message or equipment for them for a mile.
- \_\_\_ In Bible times, unlike today, no one really checked doctors to make sure they were treating people correctly.
- \_\_\_ Carpentry work was physically challenging, causing the carpenter’s body to be sturdy and muscular.
- \_\_\_ Saul killed a lion and a bear that attacked his sheep.
- \_\_\_ The work of a tanner was very clean.
- \_\_\_ Scribes rarely took their jobs seriously.
- \_\_\_ Peter and Andrew made their living as tanners.
- \_\_\_ God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and tend it.

## FILL IN THE BLANKS

- “Did you not know that I must be about My \_\_\_\_\_ business?” (Luke 2:49).
- “I am the good \_\_\_\_\_. The good shepherd gives His life for the \_\_\_\_\_” (John 10:11).
- “And Jesus, walking by the Sea of \_\_\_\_\_, saw two brothers, Simon called \_\_\_\_\_, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were \_\_\_\_\_. Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of \_\_\_\_\_.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him” (Matthew 4:18-20).



## SOLVE, FIND, AND CIRCLE

- A person who copied original documents by hand. \_\_\_\_\_
- A tanner who lived in Joppa by the Mediterranean Sea. \_\_\_\_\_
- A physician who wrote the book of Acts. \_\_\_\_\_
- Scribes who made copies of the books of the Old Testament. \_\_\_\_\_
- Occupation of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. \_\_\_\_\_
- People who take care of sheep. \_\_\_\_\_
- Said, “I am the good Shepherd.” \_\_\_\_\_

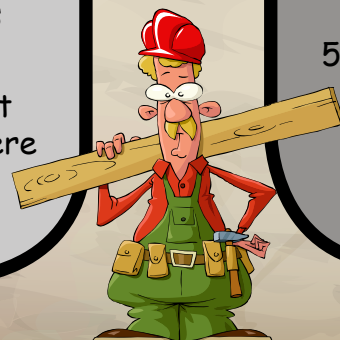
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## ACTIVITY PAGES



## ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

- List two difficulties that shepherds faced in Bible times.
- Write down at least three different occasions where Romans soldiers were mentioned in the New Testament and what was said about them.







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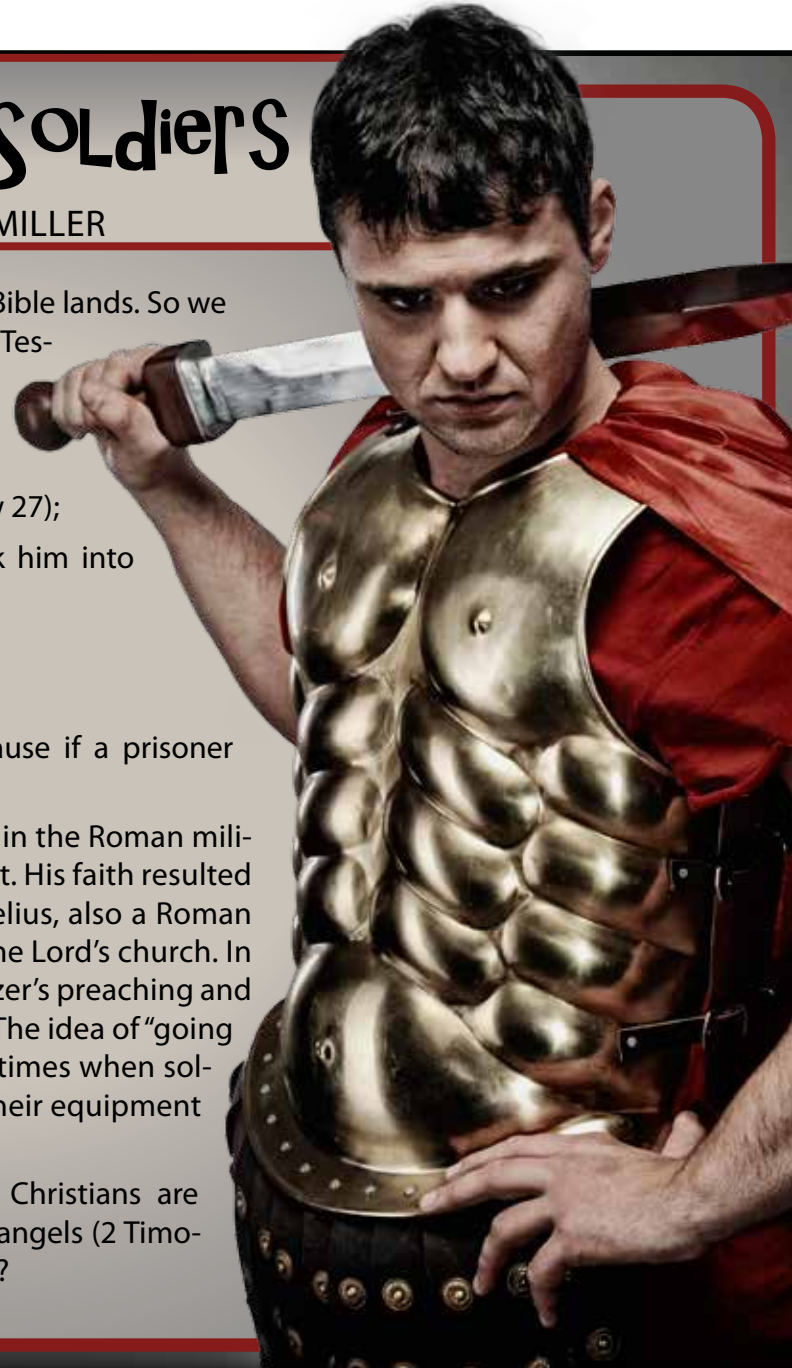
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Editor: Kyle Butt, M.A.  
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# ROMAN SOLDIERS

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## THE ROMAN

### MILITARY WAS KNOWN IN HISTORY FOR ITS MIGHT

and power. During the time of Christ, Rome controlled the Bible lands. So we would expect them to be mentioned throughout the New Testament, and they are. Roman soldiers were always around, keeping the peace, enforcing the law, and guarding things and people. We are told about Roman soldiers who:

- crucified Jesus (John 19; Luke 23; Mark 15; Matthew 27);
- stopped a mob from beating Paul to death, took him into custody, and guarded him (Acts 21; 23; 27);
- guarded Peter in prison (Acts 12);
- and guarded Paul at the end of his life (Acts 28).

Guarding was a serious job for a Roman soldier, because if a prisoner escaped, the guard would be killed (Acts 16:27; 12:19).

In Matthew 8, we read of a Roman centurion (an officer in the Roman military who commanded other troops) who loved his servant. His faith resulted in the servant being healed. In Acts 10, we read of Cornelius, also a Roman centurion, who became the first Gentile to be added to the Lord's church. In Luke 3, we read of soldiers who listened to John the Baptizer's preaching and asked Him what they needed to do to be right with God. The idea of "going the extra mile" for someone (Matthew 5:41) refers to the times when soldiers or messengers were allowed to make others carry their equipment for them for a mile—a practice which Jews resented.

More importantly, oftentimes in the New Testament, Christians are described as spiritual soldiers who fight the devil and his angels (2 Timothy 2:3-4; Ephesians 6). Are you a soldier in the Lord's army?



## ANSWERS

SOLVE, FIND, AND CIRCLE: 1. scribe; 2. Simon; 3. Luke; 4. Masoretes; 5. fishermen; 6. shepherds; 7. Jesus.

TRUE OR FALSE: 1-T; 2-F; 3-T; 4-T; 5-T; 6-F; 7-F; 8-F; 9-F; 10-T.

FILL IN THE BLANKS: 1. Father; 2. shepherd, sheep; 3. Galilee, Peter, fishermen, men.

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