

## Malchus

My name is Malchus. I was servant to the High Priest, Caiaphas. I was one of the few casualties of the arrest of Jesus, the blasphemer. I had heard about what he was doing and knew some who believed he was a prophet, but I knew the final word on him. The High Priest himself declared that he was a blasphemer and according to the Law of Moses he must die. I had absolute certainty, at least I did when we entered the Garden of Gethsemane that night.

Judas, one of the followers of Jesus, had agreed to lead us to him away from the crowds, who mostly believed in him and would have caused a riot. We had temple guards with us and I felt pretty safe. Jesus spoke, "Whom do you seek?" and we said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Then when he said, "I am he," we all fell backwards as if pushed by an invisible force. I had the first sensation of a kind of fear I had never known before. It was a fear of being wrong about Jesus.

Jesus said some more things, then out of the corner of my eye, I saw one of his followers swinging a sword and had just enough time to duck. I found out later he was a fisherman and obviously not an expert swordsman or I would be dead. "He missed me," I thought. Then I felt the blood running down my neck. My ear was hanging by a thread.

Next the strangest thing of all took place. Jesus rebuked his disciple, touched my ear and the bleeding stopped. It had just started to hurt when he did so, and the pain also ended, instantly. I heard him say to his disciple and the whole crowd, "Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?" Then I thought I heard a whisper, or was it just the wind, saying, "My witness." Then they took him away.

I was really confused. I had met the blasphemer. I had nearly been beheaded and then was healed. I heard that this Jesus said he could have called angel warriors to his aid – and I knew that they would not have missed! He did not seem to be a bad man. But, of course, the Chief Priest knows best.

As we walked back to the city, I asked a friend to look at my ear. He said that it looked normal except for a fine white line all around the back, tracing the place it had been cut – and healed. I left that thought and watched as the trial began. It bothered me that it was still night, as that was not according to the Law. Well, they finally had a proper trial before the Sanhedrin and got Jesus to confess that he claimed to be the Son of God. That should have horrified me. But it didn't!

Before Pilate, the back and forth claims and counterclaims, the accusations of the priests and the judgements of the governor, were suddenly clear to me in a totally new light. My employer, the Chief Priest, was simply manipulating the crowd to the

conclusion he wanted. He was searching for a way to influence the Roman Governor and thought of this, "Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar." Pilate responded, "Should I crucify your king?"

The reply of the whole group of chief priests, "We have no king but Caesar," suddenly removed a veil of deception from my eyes. **They** were the blasphemers! They were denying the God of Abraham and bowing before a pagan emperor!

I immediately realized that they were also wrong about Jesus! But it was too late! He was flogged, condemned and marched off to crucifixion. I walked along behind that procession, no longer loyal to my employer but transformed into a follower of Jesus of Nazareth. I saw, with a clarity I had never experienced before, the evil behind the words and actions of the High Priest and all who followed him. And I saw the courage and kindness of Jesus, clearly not a blasphemer. What would happen? Would he now call down those legions of angels?

He forgave all who mocked, flogged, condemned and crucified him. He promised one of the thieves that he would be with him in paradise that very day. He cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But then said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and finally, "It is finished." What was finished? The Son of God finished? How could that be?

I began to seek out his followers. The one who had cut off my ear did not want to talk to me but one of the others explained what Jesus had predicted. He would die but also that he would rise again on the third day. Let me skip the waiting and tell you right out. That's exactly what he did! I joined his followers after that and saw him alive after his resurrection. I was not there when he ascended but heard about it and also his promise, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses."

That phrase, "be my witnesses" caught my ear. I was to be his witness. And if anyone questioned it, I could show them the mark. That's why he left the scar!

Matthew 26, Mark 14, Luke 22, John 18, 1 Corinthians 15