

# Postcard from the tomb

From Gaius, of the Praetorium Guard in Jerusalem

Mother, Greetings in the name of the Emperor.

It hasn't been the name of the emperor that has been on everyone's lips this week but the name of another king, Jesus, or "The Christ" as these Jews call him.

It started last Sunday when this Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey and it seemed as if the whole of the city had come out to welcome him, waving palms and praising a Son of David an Ancient King of this land, and talking of the coming of the arrival of a new king.

The leaders of the city were rather worried about this as it sounded revolutionary, setting up another king against the emperor but there didn't seem to be much risk from the charge of a lone man on a donkey, what could he do in face of the might of the Roman Legions, so our commanders told us to just enjoy the spectacle.

Jesus started to act like a king though, going straight to the temple and clearing it out of all the hawkers that fill the place. The Jewish leaders were getting very nervous now and wanted us to arrest him but there were far too many people around as Jesus taught. So we had to bide our time till we could find him away from the crowds.

So we waited in the barracks and tried some of the new rations that had been prepared for us. My friend Brutus was greatly enjoying it until I told him that it was vegetarian. He paled looked quite ill and said it was treasonous to feed the soldiers of the Empire such things. I said "Et tofu, Brutus."

Ironically just then we were told that one of Jesus followers had turned traitor and he was going to lead us to where Jesus was that night. It was dark but this Judas led us right to him. There was a bit of scuffle as we arrested him but Jesus put an end to it. It was then that I started to think he was rather a strange revolutionary. We came with clubs and swords to arrest a man who only had raised arms in prayer.

He was taken to Jewish court and then before Pilate, the governor. And he was asked if he was the king. He said "It is as you say" and then wouldn't say anymore, no matter what Pilate said. Pilate tried to get him released on a technicality but this ended up with him releasing Barabbus a real revolutionary terrorist. The Jewish leaders were determined to have Jesus killed and the crowd that had praised him for having the blood of David, now just wanted his blood. Pilate had had enough, had other things to deal with do that morning and he sentence Jesus to death as the King of the Jews and had him flogged.

Some of the other soldiers made fun of this title and mocked him with a crown of thorns, and hit him. He may have been a rather strange king but he had done nothing to deserve this treatment rather he seemed to grow in dignity as this treatment continued and I couldn't bring myself to join in.

We took him out to be crucified and lots of people including the Jewish leaders came and mocked him for claiming to be the King, they couldn't follow a king that died this way. His God must have rejected him. Maybe these taunts stung him for he cried out "My God, My God why have you rejected me" and soon died.

I'm writing to you Mum but a few were calling for their mothers when Jesus died because there was an earthquake and all sorts of strange goings on. The centurion said "Surely he was the Son of God" and Brutus and I agreed muttering "Yeah and we killed him."

Such comments were not taken kindly by those that heard it and so now here we are both guarding Jesus tomb.

Easy job really but apparently he claimed that he would rise again and the leaders are worried that his followers would steal his body, but they all ran off on Thursday night and have been denying that they ever knew him every since, I don't think we have much to worry about from them.

You have a bit of time to think when guarding a dead man, which is why I have time to write, as I guess news of this will never get to Rome. But as I watched all the events of yesterday you couldn't help but admire this Jesus. He was the kind of King that I could follow, not a ruler of violence but of peace. But his kind never seem to win, they get crushed by brute political power never to rise again.

The only hope would be if Jesus did rise that would show that God hadn't rejected him, but then it would be my job to make sure that he didn't get out. But could anything stop him, if he could defeat death then surely he would be the true king.

Ah what am I thinking its now late and it was a very long day yesterday. That was Friday and now Sunday's coming.

*Richard Humphrey  
Dean of Hobart*