

Roman Occupation During Life of Christ

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Members of the Church of God are wondering how the upcoming United States election on Nov. 3 will affect world events. Members of the Church of God who are citizens of the United States are wondering how the upcoming election will affect the practical day-to-day living within the United States.

Frame of reference

At this time, I want to make four statements about my worldview.

- I understand that the founding documents of the United States do not have superiority over the Bible or the Kingdom of God.
- I appreciate the founding documents of the United States—which have provided rights and freedoms not known by much of the world. (Those documents needed to be amended over time to serve various needs of the populace.)
- I personally do not want to see the United States adopt the ideologies of communism, Marxism or socialism.
- Understanding Bible history about the civil government into which the Son of God was born can help Bible students prepare for the possible loss of rights and freedoms.

Time of Caesar

Luke 2:1—"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered."

Luke 3:1-2—"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness."

Helping soldiers

Luke 3:14—"Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, 'And what shall we do?' So he said to them, 'Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.' "

Luke 7:2-8—"And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews

to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, 'Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, "Go," and he goes; and to another, "Come," and he comes; and to my servant, "Do this," and he does it.' "

Pitted against Caesar

John 11:48—"If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

Luke 20:22-25—"Then they asked Him saying . . . 'Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?' But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, 'Why do you test Me? Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?' They answered and said, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.' "

Luke 23:2—"And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.' "

John 19:12—"From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, 'If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.' "

John 19:15—"But they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar!' "

Soldiers' behavior

Luke 23:36-37—"The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' "

Luke 23:47—"So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous Man!' "

John 19:23-24—"Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: 'They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.' Therefore the soldiers did these things."

John 19:32-34—"Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out."