

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



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Jesus Versus Spartacus

--By Terry Carter

From 73-71 B.C., a man named Spartacus led a rebellion of slaves against the Roman Empire. Hollywood told their version of the tale in a 1960 movie starring Kirk Douglas. Of course, they put their own spin on the story.

Historians are divided as to what motivated Spartacus. In the Hollywood telling, he is interested in ending slavery throughout the empire.

The Hollywood version also includes a romantic angle with Spartacus taking a fellow slave woman as a wife and fathering a child by her. While the Hollywood version may not be the most accurate from a historical perspective, it does provide some food for thought as does the actual historical facts.

At that time about one of every three people in the empire were slaves. History tells us that at one time he led as many as 70,000 men. Spartacus was also an excellent tactician enjoying surprising success against the Roman armies. Eventually the rebellion was defeated.

It is unclear from historical records whether Spartacus survived the final battle with Rome or not. The Hollywood version has him crucified on a cross at the end with his wife showing their son to him and promising to tell him about his father.

What we do know is that some 6,000 survivors of the final battle were hung on crosses along the Appian Way from Rome to Capua. This is a distance of 120 miles. That means that there were 50 crosses every mile for 120 miles. That amounts to one cross about every 105 feet. Rome wanted to send a clear message to any would be rebels.

Two of the most memorable lines in the movie have to do with Rome's desire to be certain that Spartacus is dead. The survivors were asked which one of them was Spartacus. They all began to yell, "I am Spartacus".

Later, his wife was taken by the Roman General that defeated him. She and he both believed that Spartacus

was dead. She told him that when Spartacus died, thousands would have gladly died in his place.

About 100 years later, a man named Jesus died on a cross outside Jerusalem. He came to save us from the slavery and bondage of sin.

When He died, nobody volunteered to take His place. The crowd preferred a rebel and a murderer be released rather than Jesus. His closest followers fled in fear at His arrest. But He did not need anyone to die in His place. He came to die in our place.

Jesus never led an army or rebelled against Rome. When He was arrested, He asked them why they came with swords and clubs. He told His disciples to put away their swords and even healed one of them who came to arrest Him. He willingly suffered on our behalf.

Crucifixion was the end of the rebellion for Spartacus, but it only marked the beginning for Jesus. Spartacus is still dead today, but Jesus rose from the dead and is alive forevermore.

Nobody followed Spartacus after his death. Much of the world has followed Jesus since His death.

Spartacus brought about the death of tens of thousands and accomplished nothing in the end. Jesus has brought eternal life to millions and only His kingdom has endured and will endure in the end.

Ultimately, Spartacus could not end slavery of any kind. Jesus ended spiritual slavery for whosoever will and His followers put an end to physical slavery in most of the world.

Spartacus did what man can do. Jesus did what no mere man could ever do.

Praise God for what Jesus has done for us.