

A centurion would have 80 professional soldiers under his command. Likely 20 or so support workers skilled as scouts, or in construction, or other skills, which would make up a group of 100. The centurion would likely have served in the military for 10-20 years before earning their position. They would have fought many battles and would be hard and very disciplined men. >>The Bible lists a number of centurions in Scripture: At the crucifixion of Christ, Matt. 27:54. Cornelius in Acts 10:22. Those who stopped the beating of Paul, Acts 21:32. A centurion, Julius, protected Paul on his journey to Italy, Acts 27:1.

**Walkthrough of the Conversational Exchanges of the Centurion and Christ:**

1. Exchange #1: Matt. 8:5-7: in Capernaum, the centurion cares for his servant who is paralyzed and tormented in pain. Jesus agrees to come to his house. A Jew would never have entered the home of a Gentile, considering them unclean, but Jesus agrees to go to his home (having previously healed an unclean Jewish leper).
2. Exchange #2 Interrupted: V8-10a: the centurion acknowledged he was unworthy to have Christ visit his home. He believed that Christ had power over sickness and disease. Col. 1:16, all things were created by and through Christ. Heb. 1:1-2, Jesus made the worlds with His words. His words had great power to command healing and save.
3. Teachable Moment: V10-12: Jesus gives a rebuke to the Jews, "I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel."
  - a. V11: Jesus continues, "many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." The words of Jesus reference other passages in the OT. The Jews would have had little complaint with V11. Is. 43:5-6, Is. 49:12, Ps. 107:2-3. But as in Amos 9 and Rom. Ch. 9-11, not all Israel is Israel, but a remnant will be saved.
  - b. V12: Jesus continues, "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness." This is judgement on Jews who will be cast into hell. Many will gnash their teeth in anger towards God.
    - i. In Matt. 21:43-45, Jesus speaks of giving the Kingdom of God to the nations. V45, the Jews knew that Jesus was speaking of them (V43).
    - ii. In Matt. 22:1-6, Jesus tells how the Jews murdered the prophets God sent to them. In V9-10, the king filled his feast with guests (Gentiles) because the murderers were destroyed (V7) and the servants of the king weren't worthy.
    - iii. Matt. 19:28, there would be Jews who were judged by the apostles in the Kingdom of God, but these Jews Jesus spoke to in Matthew 8 would not inherit it.
4. Second Exchange Finished: V13: Jesus healed the servant that very hour. The centurion came to Jesus as a believer and knew Jesus was King over all things.

**What Did the Centurion Believe about God and Salvation:**

1. The centurion believed in the One True God. He rejected all the Roman gods. Luke 7:5, this centurion built the synagogue there and loves the nation.
2. The centurion believed that God is Holy: Luke 7:6, Matt. 8:8, stating that he wasn't worthy to have Jesus in his house.
3. The centurion believed that Jesus is the Son of the Living God. He calls Jesus, "kurios," or Lord and Master in Matt. 8:6 & 8.
4. The centurion believed that Jesus had the power of God to heal physical illness. Matt.8:8-9.

5. The centurion believed he himself and mankind are unholy and unworthy of God. The centurion said in Luke 7:6, “for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.”
  - i. Luke 7:3, the centurion sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus to come and heal his servant.
  - ii. Luke 7:4-5, the Jews spoke to Jesus of the centurion’s good works and support of the nation and building of the synagogue. He didn’t tout his good deeds to Jesus.
  - iii. Luke 7:6-7, the centurion’s request of Jesus, “I did not even think myself worthy to come to You.”
6. The centurion believed that salvation was only found by those who put their faith in the person of Jesus. Matt. 8:13, Jesus healed his servant. He believed that those who don’t believe in the Son of God will be cast into hell.
  - i. The Gospel was preached in Matthew 5 to the poor in spirit, to those who mourn, to the meek, to those who hunger and thirst, to the merciful, to the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and those who are persecuted for Jesus’ name’s sake.
    - a. This centurion believed this message and trusted in the Lord.

### **Further Discussion and Application**

When we examine the lives of the leper in Matt. 8:1-4 and the centurion of 8:5-13, how did these men demonstrate the life of one that believed in Jesus? How did they demonstrate the Beatitudes in Matt. 5:2-12? How did the centurion demonstrate Matt. 5:43-48? How did the leper demonstrate Matt. 7:7-12?

Did Jesus reject the one who came to Him in faith? What is the message of the Gospel to those who come to Christ? What is the position of the heart towards God (humility, meekness)? Why would the healing of the centurion’s servant be a miracle that would spread the Gospel of Jesus? Who would have learned of this act of kindness by the Lord?

What evangelistic message could you give to a family member who felt they weren’t worthy to receive salvation? What do the passages in Luke 7 and Matthew 8 show to us about the heart and sacrifice made by the centurion? What fruit resulted from the centurion because he believed in the Lord Jesus? What fruits should the believer bear from Gal. 5:16-26 and as seen in Matthew Chapters 5-7?