

He sure was in a pretty big hurry. The soldier from the Roman guard, I mean. He just left here ...you may have passed him on your way in! He came here all in an uproar over some Jesse ...or Jesu ...uh, some man stirring up a lot a trouble.

Something about being some king of the Jewish people. Well, that's what this guard said anyway ...and he came here all anxious, looking for one of my special whips ...like this one, except way more dangerous.

I wonder what's going on over at the governor's place that someone should deserve a beating from one of my special whips. You see, the one he took ...the whip, I mean ...like I said, it's a special kind. I'd hate to be the unlucky sport they exercise that one on. I say it's special because it has sharp stones sewn into the ends of the talons that gouge the flesh. Oh, it's wicked!

I hope it's not that Jesse or Jesu ... JESUS! Yeah, that's what the soldier said his name is ...Jesus. Says he's another one of those self-proclaimed Messiah/Savior kings, I guess. So, what's the big deal? They come around all the time claiming to be someone they are not. He can't be hurting anyone. Besides, they only use my special whips on the most hardened of criminals like murderers and political insurrectionists.

What's the harm in people playing like they're a Messiah/Savior or king? Some people take their religion a little too far. I've never heard about him starting any war or anything. Surely this Jesus can't deserve Why would they want one of my whips?

You know, a lot of people get upset with me because I make these whips. You might be one of them. People come down on me all the time telling me I'm encouraging violence by producing these instruments of pain and torture. Well, I'll tell you what ...like I always say, "Whips don't hurt people! People hurt people using whips!"

Besides ...whether you like it or not, there's a good market for these whips with the military and the fact is, I have to make a living. So nobody can make me feel like what goes on up there at the governor's place today, or anytime those soldiers decide to use my whips, is somehow my fault. No way! And if they decide to whip that man Jesus until his back is gaping open ...hey, that's their business. His blood isn't on my hands. I have nothing to do with that! Look, I take too much pride in my craft to let anybody get me down about what someone else does with it.

Still and all, I hope it isn't that Jesus fella. From what the soldier said, it doesn't make any sense. I mean, I can't believe that he would have done anything to deserve a beating with one of my ...one of those special whips.

He did say something strange while he was here, now that I think about it ...the soldier, I mean. Well, we kind of had a few minutes to talk even though he was in a real big hurry to get the whip and go. I wasn't quite finished putting the handle on it when he got here. Anyway, one of the things the guard said was that this Jesus fella ...this king of sorts ...seemed to have an extraordinary amount of people shouting for Pilate, the governor, to crucify him.

The strange thing is, as far as I know, they never beat a man, especially with one of my ... those special whips and then hang him. That's completely unheard of. And yet the guard said that all this Jesus fellow is accused of, is being the Messiah -- like a savior or something.

I guess the religious leaders want to trump him up on criminal charges of blasphemy and insubordination. That must be where the reference to him being a king comes from. But still, a flogging and then a crucifixion just for claiming to be a king? What possible harm could there be in that?

Not only that, but something else the guard said before I finished the whip for him was that this Jesus fella...seems to only have a handful of supporters who are willing to stand up for him there at the governor's place. He said that when they arrested this Jesus, most of his regular followers who were with him in some garden on the other side of town last night - Gethsemane -ran away. It sounds like they deserted him. Apparently those who didn't, the ones up in the governor's palace with him right now ...well, as the guard puts it, "they are a bunch of weeping women and a few weakling men."

What kind of a guy is this anyway? Only the scruff of society seems to pay any mind to his claim that he really is a Savior or a king. A bunch of weaklings. It all sounds pretty ridiculous if you ask me.

I mean, if the Roman guard were about to tear my back open with one of those whips and then nail me to a cross, you better believe I would drop the whole business about being the Messiah real fast. Wouldn't you?

I don't care how devout one is to his religion or his belief, if someone was going to kill you for it, you would have to be pretty crazy to stick to your story. Hey, don't get me wrong. I'll be the first one to tell you I believe in God, but come on ...if you say you're going to kill me for it ...watch me run. Who needs that? And those weepy women and little men who are standing by this Jesus ... well, all I can say is they must be nuts too.

I'm just glad I don't have anything to do with that mess up there. Even if it is one of those special whips I make that they use on him. Th ... that doesn't ...mean ...I'm involved ... Okay ... at least not any more than any of you. I don't see any of you standing up for him!

Still, I can't help but think that something just isn't right about what's going on up there at the governor's place. I mean, either that Jesus is a total fool or, he's for real. And why those few women and men would stay with him through all that ...I don't care how strong their belief in him is, I know I wouldn't be able to stick with him ...it looks like it would be too dangerous ...too frustrating for my tastes.

Hey, if I was going to sink my belief and my life into someone who is claiming to be the savior of the people, I would want to know without any doubt that that someone is for real. What about you? Wouldn't you want to know he's for real before you choose to put your reputation on the line for him?

Your life? I mean, would you put your trust in someone who was just going to stand there and take all that abuse from those soldiers and who would let all those other people go ahead and rally for his death? You'd think he'd at least apologize for the whole big misunderstanding and be done with it.

But apparently not this Jesus! He is going to go through with it, flogging and all! Oh, I pity his back when the soldiers finish with that whip I made.

He's either a fool... or I am.