

The Good Soldier

By Doug Irving & Gary Randolph



Theme and Purpose

History records that Herod had a large contingent of bodyguards to do his bidding. He once dispatched 500 members of his bodyguard to assist a Roman expedition to Arabia. When Herod was summoned before the Jewish Sanhedrin, accused of murdering a guerrilla leader, he brought his armed bodyguard, and the matter was simply dropped. Were members of his bodyguard Jews, Greeks, Romans, Arabs? Probably all the above and more - anyone willing to be a mercenary. And yet as children of God they must have retained a spark of love, of hope, of honor, and maybe even of conscience.

The Bible calls Jesus a stumbling block - not that God wanted anyone to stumble. But like a boulder in the middle of a stream, water must go either one way or the other. We all face a decision about what to do with the Christ child.

Cast list	Soldier
Approximate Running Time	3 minutes
Scene Description	Soldier in barracks, cleaning his sword
Prop List	Sword, cleaning cloth
Other Production Notes	None
Related Scriptures	Matthew 2:1-18; 1 Peter 2:6-8
Song Suggestions	I See You (Rich Mullins); Watercolor Ponies

Soldier enters, removes helmet and drops down on the bench. He pulls out a leather chamois and begins cleaning his sword.

Soldier:

I did my job. What I was paid to do. *(pause)* King of the Jews. Messiah, the Jews called him, the anointed one. Anointed now in blood. *(with a grim chuckle)* It seems the God of the Jews underestimated the kings of this world if he thought Herod could be supplanted so easily.

(suddenly more sullen) It was those wise men who started all the commotion. If they were so wise they should have known Herod's household had no baby. But they marched right in to him and asked, "Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We have followed his star rising in the eastern sky." I saw Herod's face darken - but just for a moment. Then he smiled at them and summoned the teachers of the law.

One said this. The other said that. But in the end, they told the wise men to look in Bethlehem - a nothing of a town. Herod offered to send us with them - "for their protection," he said. They were wise enough to decline that offer... which saved their lives.

So Herod waited. Smug at first, then anxious, then with growing rage as he realized the wise men were not coming back. Angrily he dispatched us to find the child. We, too, were seeking the one born king of the Jews.

We could have just inquired. A few coins would have led us to the child. But Herod was so furious at having been tricked he ordered the massacre of every toddler boy in the vicinity. Every one... *(his voice trails off)*

(Coming back around) The mothers wailed as I tore the children from their arms. Some of the women collapsed before us. Some risked their own lives trying to fight, but I stayed my hand. Our orders were to just kill the whelps. And we did our job.

We rode out of town, the wailing from the village drowning out the horses' hooves. As twilight fell and the stars came out on our journey back to Jerusalem I remembered the star of the magi. What if we had not obeyed this dreadful order? What if we had not killed this Messiah? Would he have grown up to be a good and wise king? Would he have ruled with justice instead of the sword? Would he have shone like a star in the dark night sky to help us find our way? Maybe this troubled land and people would at last have found hope and peace. But now we'll never know.

Fade to black

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