

SECURITY

“I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12)

In March 1974, a group of peasants digging a well in drought stricken Shaanxi province in northwest China unearthed one of the greatest archeological discoveries of all time. Their discovery of a terra cotta soldier was the first of 8,000 such soldiers to be discovered. These soldiers were in three groups: infantry, cavalry, and charioteers. Each life sized soldier is unique, apparently sculpted after a real person. For example, every facial expression and every ear are shaped a little differently just like ours are. These clay soldiers hold real weapons such as bronze swords, long bows, arrows, daggers, battle axes, Etc. These weapons were specially treated to avoid corrosion and are still sharp after being buried for over 2,000 years. The horses are also life sized and are harnessed to real wooden chariots. Some consider this discovery to be the eighth world of the ancient world.

The site is located about a 30 minute drive from the famous city of Xian with a population of 8.5 million. Xian is said to be the eastern departure point of the Great Silk Road. The project of clay soldiers began in 246 B.C. when Emperor Qin took the throne at the age of 13. In 25 short years he had united all the provinces of China, standardized weights and measures, connected the country with an elaborate system of highways, and erected the first version of the Great Wall. Qin died in 210 B.C. at the age of 49.

It seems that this elaborate army was there to protect the tomb of the deceased emperor. The massive project involved 700,000 laborers and took 40 years to complete. It seems obvious that this powerful emperor was very insecure about death. Why else would he go to all this trouble?

Contrast the insecurity of Emperor Qin with the absolute security of the Apostle Paul. When he wrote our text he was an old man in a Roman prison. He knew that the day of his execution was near, yet he remained the picture of perfect peace. Later in this same letter he wrote: **“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.” (2 Timothy 4:6-8 KJV)**

Christianity is unique in the religions of the world in that our security depends upon the righteousness of Christ, and not our own. All the other religions of the world are merit based, but Christianity is not! Paul’s security was not in “what” he believed, but in “whom” he believed. Our faith is personal, not propositional.

This revolutionary concept is an integral part of the Gospel. One of the many ways it is taught in the Bible was the symbolism of a bronze serpent in the days of Moses. (See Nu. 21:1 - 9). When the people sinned against God He sent fiery serpents in their midst and many who were bitten died. God gave to Moses a revolutionary solution to this problem. He was to make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. Against all human wisdom those who were bitten were not to rely upon themselves, but rather to look on that symbol and trust it to save them. Remarkably, everyone who trusted and obeyed God lived.

John reminded his readers of this story and insisted that just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so Jesus would also be lifted up. Our salvation does not depend upon our own wit and wisdom, but upon Jesus. Jesus never fails (Is. 42:4). Unfortunately we do!

A similar situation was experienced by Peter when he was walking on the water. As long as he kept his focus on Jesus he was able to do it. When he turned his eyes away from Jesus he began to sink (Matt. 14:22 - 32). Paul knew “Whom” he believed, do you?