

Dear Bonnie,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You said that during your church meeting there was quite a discussion regarding the number of soldiers that Pilate assigned to guard the tomb of Jesus. You wanted to know if we had any thoughts on this matter.

We cannot give you a definitive answer to your question, since no number is given in the Matthew 27 or 28 accounts. Bible commentators have differing views regarding how many soldiers were employed. We will quote Matthew 27:65-66 from Wilson's "Emphatic Diaglott", which is an interlineary word for word English translation.

"Pilate said to them, 'You have a Guard; go, make it as secure as you know how.' And departing, they secured the tomb with the Guard, having sealed the stone." The footnote for that scripture reads as follows: "The Jews had a Roman guard appointed them for the security of the temple. It was usually stationed in the castle of Antonia, but removed during festivals to the outer court of the temple to quell any tumult that might arise in the city. Pilate gave them leave to employ this guard for their present purpose."

However, other commentaries say that the guard could have been composed of either Roman soldiers or temple police. A footnote on verse 65 from the NIV Study Bible reads: "Matthew 28:14 implies that they [the guard] were answerable to Pilate, which may favor Roman soldiers. On the other hand, the fact that in Matthew 28:11 they 'reported to the chief priests' (instead of Pilate) may favor temple police, who would have been under the authority of the religious leaders." As is evident from the commentaries there is no consensus as to who employed the guards. As to how many guards were actually employed, we could find no definitive answer, only speculation.

How many soldiers were on duty guarding Jesus' tomb? We do not know. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at [www.christianquestions.net](http://www.christianquestions.net). The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

**Christian Questions Radio**