

(Continued)

The winner would receive a symbol of their victory, such as a golden bowl, crown, or gold coin, along with a palm leaf symbolizing victory.

The Romans seemed ambivalent to the violent nature of the gladiatorial games. They were blood thirsty and cruel and, though we may condemn them, the games are not unlike modern professional sports like hockey, boxing, kick boxing, Pit Bull Fights, and football. The gladiators were the heroes of their time, especially during the years of peace under the Augustans in the first and second centuries. Without war heroes, Roman needed someone to idolize and this role fell to the gladiators. There is evidence that Roman women especially idolized gladiators, sometimes to the dismay of their husbands and children.

Exotic wild beasts from the far reaches of the Roman empire were brought to Rome and hunts were held in the morning prior to the afternoon main event of gladiatorial duels. The hunts were held in the Forum. Special precautions were taken to prevent the animals from escaping these venues, such as the erection of barriers and the digging of ditches. Very few animals survived these hunts. Thousands of wild animals would be slaughtered in one day. For instance, at the games Trajan held when he became emperor, over 9,000 animals were killed.

Is America returning to the days of the Gladiators? Is some who consider themselves Christian take pleasure in seeing people, hurt, maimed, and even killed in the name of sport common. May we ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do...?" when confronted with such sport?

Plainly, don't get short changed. Let's be ready to meet our Maker. The Bible (in Acts) teaches that to avoid hell and gain heaven - one must:

- 1) Believe In Jesus As Savior (16:31)
- 2) Repent Of Sins (17:30)
- 3) Confess Christ Audibly (8:37)
- 4) Be Baptized In Water (2:38)
- 5) Live A Christian Life (14:22)
- 6) Be Active In the Church (2:47)

KYOWVA Evangelistic Association
1541 S. 7th Street * Ironton, OH 45638
Web Page: www.kyowva.com
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