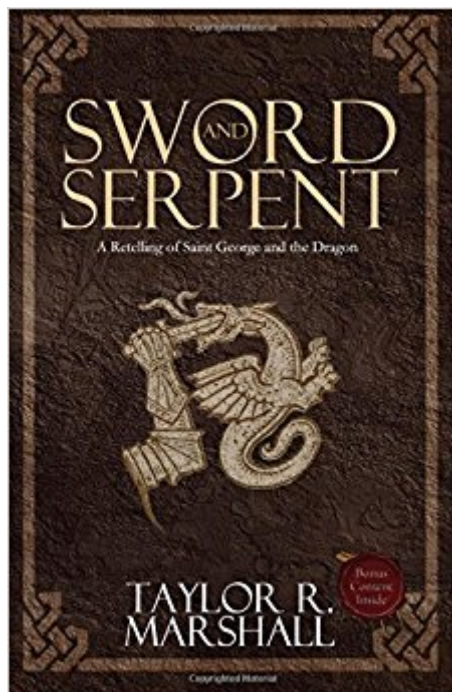


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Sword And Serpent



Synopsis

Every Legend Has A Beginning The year is A.D. 299. Diocletian rules the Roman Empire. And the gods have suddenly fallen silent. 17-year-old Jurian doesn't have time for the gods. He's trying to hold his family together after his father died in disgrace, and piety -- even to the Christ -- just isn't practical. But then a ruthless enemy targets his family, forcing Jurian to make a choice: will he pursue the glory he's always wanted, or will he sacrifice everything to protect a faith that was never really his own? On the other side of the Empire, the young priestess Sabra shields her people from the terrible vengeance of the old god she serves. But even as she offers the dark and bloody sacrifices the god demands, visions of desolation haunt her dreams. As suspicion tightens its stranglehold on her city, Sabra must unravel the mystery of the god's portents before everything she's ever loved is destroyed. Fear of the gods' silence sparks a bloody persecution that will soon consume the Empire. As the fires of suspicion and hatred ignite around them, Jurian and Sabra are drawn together by a mysterious prophecy...one that will set them on a journey to battle an evil beyond imagining. Saints aren't born. They are forged.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a dramatic retelling of the legend of Saint George. It is rooted in a realistic and clearly well-researched view of the time frame, giving a real flavor of the religious and political milieu in which the original Saint George likely lived. You experience a taste of Roman politics and culture, and the crazy diversity of faiths which existed at the time. The story starts in the eastern Roman empire, probably just before the start of the Diocletian persecution. Once the stage is set, the action

quickly takes off. It starts with our leading character as a young man, and he ends up on a journey that is both literal and figurative - he travels to Rome and then to Libya, and in the meantime, has to figure out what kind of man he wants to be in a world that he knows is starting to go crazy. Along the way, he meets many other important figures of the early AD 300s. The book is truly brilliant in weaving together the accounts of other early saints, other historical figures, and even an allusion to the Arthurian legend, but in a way that seems natural and believable, never forced. If you know some of the history, these connections will enrich your enjoyment of the story, but even if you don't, you should enjoy the fast-paced, intense storytelling. The main story arch builds over most of the book, giving a real sense of tension that keeps you turning the pages. Meanwhile, various subplots contain shocking twists, keeping you surprised. You might think you know the story of Saint George and the dragon, but you will never set this book aside thinking "I know what happens next." It is a story with moments of humor, moments of deep darkness, and lots of action, but through all of it, a line of hope. Recommended for anyone who enjoys historical fiction set in late antiquity or for anyone interested in a faithful (in all senses) telling of the story of Saint George.

Not sure what took me so long to purchase this book. I have read Dr. Taylor's other books and love his writing style. He processes that unique gift of imparting vast amounts of knowledge in an easily understandable way. I absolutely loved this story. Saints George (Jurian), Christopher (Menas), Blaise, Nicholas and Cyriacus have become friends. I have gained an understanding of the Roman and Christian world as it existed at the end of the 200's when the Christians were entering another (and in the end severest) persecution under the Emperor Diocletian. When I finished this book I was thrilled to see that there was a sequel which turned out to be every bit as good as the first book. I cannot wait until the third book in this series gets published. These books are definitely a recommend! You will enjoy them!

This book was absolutely wonderful. It is well written and fast paced with characters that are extremely well done. I loved the inclusion of various figures from early Christianity. It is not always obvious, but if you know the names of some common early saints like Nicholas, you will find them included in this book. Jurian is exceptionally well done. The female lead character felt a bit forced at times and that part of the story didn't seem to fit quite as well nor to be quite as natural, but in the end it worked out quite well. My only complaint is that there are not more books done in the same line as the characters continue to develop. It is a great read and I definitely recommend it.

I have heard stories of St. George and the Dragon and St. Christopher, and about St. Catherine of Alexandria and other early saints. About the horror and persecution of Diocletian (AD300) and its setting in eastern frontier of the Roman Empire. It was not until I read *The Sword and Serpent* by Dr. Taylor Marshall that these names began to take on a picture and context, a connectedness that I have thoroughly enjoyed. I got caught up in the lives and the times of the Catholic Church during one of its more violent periods in its young growth. It is exciting on several levels with its character development and description of the setting. The physical struggle interlaced with the spiritual reality is uplifting. It left me with a real thirst for more. It is something that all, young and old, will enjoy and want to share with others.

I sometimes have trouble getting through fiction books especially as they plod along, but this book was a great and ended up as a quick read that I didn't even want to put down. The book immerses you in Roman times during the era of Diocletian and uses a two person narrative to drive the story. The intermixing of other saints, and the attributed legends behind them, added to the story more than it took away from the main plot. I really enjoyed the message through the book of the basics of Christianity and what it means to be truly a soldier. My only complaint (which is a half complaint) was that the sprinkling of the use of Latin for certain words took me out of the story a few times (luckily the appendix had definitions for most). I am conflicted since I was able to quickly find the definition at the back, and I can understand using the one-word terms for something specific.

This is a delightful novel that is based on history, but it is also fanciful and imaginative. It brings in a number of late 3rd century saints, focusing primarily on Saint George and incorporating the little we know about Saint Christopher. As both a historian and theologian I enjoyed it immensely, but I believe it would also be enjoyable to schoolchildren, for whom it would lay an excellent background for the understanding of the last Christian persecutions in the Roman Empire. It is the first of a trilogy, the third volume of which is expected to be published later this year. Its author, Taylor Marshall, is a brilliant Thomistic Catholic apologist.

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