

7. A MATTER OF HONOR

And they crucified Him. Mark 15:24

He was a Centurion.

A career soldier.

Sworn to honor and defend the Empire with his very life.

But this?

Where was the honor in this?

He watched with disgust as the soldiers under his command went about the business of death with a frenzied eagerness.

They were coarse.

Vulgar.

Merciless men.

Numb to all emotion.

“Where there is no heart,” he thought to himself, “there is no brain.”

They offered the prisoner sour wine and gall.

It would deaden the pain.

Dull the mind.

Within minutes, He would not know who He was or where He was.

He refused it.

They showed Him the iron spikes.

Two of them longer than His hand.

Thicker than one of His fingers.

A third spike even longer.

Thicker.

He said nothing.

Asked for nothing.

They laughed and tore into their task with a frantic enthusiasm.

Spikes pierced wrists with a poisonous rhythm.

“A little too much enthusiasm,” thought the Centurion, but he would not say it aloud.

Many in the crowd roared their approval.

Many turned away.

The Centurion did not.

Could not.

He would be expected to be cold and efficient.
Honor bound to the Empire.
Honor bound to be sure that the crucifixion was carried out properly without complications.
To turn away would show weakness.

Arms now secured to the cross, the soldiers looked to their leader.
A career soldier.
Sworn to honor and defend the Empire with his very life.
But this?
Where was the honor in this?

He nodded.

And the soldiers of death drove the third spike through both feet, deep into the cross.

Horses screamed.
Dogs howled.
Soldiers cursed.
Women wailed.
Deafening echoes of madness filled the air.
Everywhere.
As though the gods had shattered the heavens.

But this one - this one they nailed to the cross.
He had an impenetrable calmness.
He said nothing.
Asked for nothing.

“He suffers this as though He has an eternity behind Him and before Him,”
the Centurion said to anyone who would listen.
No one did.

They raised the cross.
The spikes held.
The prisoner hung.
Suspended.
Between heaven and earth.

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RELATED QUIZZES

VOCABULARY

1. Centurion: leader
2. Frenzied: wildly excited; enthusiastic
3. Coarse: gross; crude; rough
4. Vulgar: rude; indecent
5. Merciless: cruel; showing no pity
6. Gall: vinegar
7. Frantic enthusiasm: desperate excitement; wild excitement
8. Pierced: made a hole in
9. Efficient: very good
10. Crucifixion: death by hanging on a cross
11. Complications: difficulties, problems that are not expected
12. Secured: attached
13. Wailed: cried loudly
14. Shattered: torn to pieces; ripped apart
15. Impenetrable: mysterious; can not be understood
16. Eternity: forever
17. Suspended: hung

1. The spikes _____ wrists and feet.

- A. Pierced
- B. Shattered
- C. Suspended

2. The soldiers went about their work with a _____ enthusiasm.

- A. Frantic
- B. Vulgar
- C. Efficient

3. Even though people were screaming and wailing all around, Jesus had a _____ calm about Him.

- A. Merciless
- B. Impenetrable
- C. Frenzied

4. The way Jesus was killed was known as _____.

- A. Centurion

- B. Complications
- C. Crucifixion

5. When they raised the cross, Jesus was _____ between Heaven and earth.

- A. Secured
- B. Frenzied
- C. Suspended

TRUE/FALSE

1. A Centurion was often a career soldier. True.
2. Jesus was offered gall because he was thirsty. False. Jesus was offered gall to help make the pain go away.
3. The Centurion didn't have to watch everything that the soldiers did to Jesus. False. If the Centurion didn't watch, everyone would think he was not a good leader.
4. When the soldiers drove the spikes into the wrists of Jesus, the crowd got very quiet. False. Many in the crowd roared their approval.
5. With all the yelling and screaming going on around Him, Jesus remained silent. True.

READING COMPREHENSION

WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE STORY?

- A. The Centurion - angry because Jesus did not complain or cry out in pain.
- B. The Centurion - impressed with the way Jesus handled what was happening to Him.
- C. The Centurion - thinking that his men had no heart.

WHAT BELONGS IN THE MIDDLE?

1. The soldiers secure Jesus to the cross.
 - 2.?
 3. Jesus is suspended between Heaven and earth.
- A. The cross is painted.
 - B. The cross is raised.

C. The cross is turned upside down.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

1. The Centurion was impressed with Jesus because He _____.

- A. Did not cry out in pain.
- B. Told the soldiers He forgave them.
- C. Yelled at the soldiers.

2. When they drove the spike into the feet of Jesus, the air was filled with so much noise it was as if _____.

- A. Everyone wanted them to stop what they were doing.
- B. The whole world was watching.
- C. The Heavens had been shattered.

INFERENCES

Jesus suffered quietly, as if He had _____ behind Him and before Him.

- A. No one.
- B. Good friends.
- C. An eternity.

FACTS AND DETAILS

1. The spikes used at the crucifixion were made of _____.

- A. Wood.
- B. Tin.
- C. Iron.

2. The Centurion did not think there was any _____ in supervising a crucifixion.

- A. Money.
- B. Honor.
- C. Future.

3. Some of the animals present at the crucifixion were _____ and _____.

- A. Cats and dogs.
- B. Horses and dogs.
- C. Sheep and horses.

4. The soldiers used a total of _____ spikes to secure Jesus to the cross.

- A. Three.
- B. Two.
- C. Four.

DID YOU KNOW?

Centurion came from the word “century” which means 100, but the Roman Centurion was in charge of only 80 men.