

8. FOLLOWING ORDERS

One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear. John 19:34

The order had been given.

All three crucified men must breathe their last.

Immediately.

He would follow orders.

He was trained to follow orders.

He was trained to kill.

With a sword.

With a knife.

With any weapon at his disposal.

Including the spear he now held in his hands.

To end the life of a man hanging on a cross was to break his legs. He would not be able to support his sagging body, not be able to allow the sweet breath of life into his lungs and would very quickly suffocate.

The soldiers stood by the man hanging on the cross next to the One called The King of the Jews.

Looked to their leader.

He nodded.

The soldiers broke his legs.

Within minutes, he breathed no more.

They moved to the man hanging on the cross on the other side of the One they called The King of the Jews.

Looked to their leader.

He nodded again.

The soldiers broke his legs.

Within minutes, he breathed no more.

They moved to the cross that bore the body of the One they called The King of the Jews.

Looked to their leader.

Waited for his signal.

He had watched this one closely.

Watched the flogging, so vicious that few men could have lived through it.

Watched the walk to Calvary, so strenuous that someone had to step in and help carry His cross.

Watched the stakes driven into His body, securing Him to the cross.

Watched as He suffered more torture than any other he had seen, even in war.

And marveled that He did not utter a single word of protest.

An insoluble mystery.

“Do we proceed?” asked one of the soldiers, irritated.

Still he looked upon the man on the cross.

After all He had endured, did He deserve this final humiliation?

“Do we proceed?” the soldier asked again, more irritated.

The order had been given.

All three crucified men must breath their last.

Immediately.

He would follow orders.

“This one has already breathed His last,” he answered. “But, just to be sure ...” and before anyone could move, he thrust his spear into the side of the One they called The King of the Jews.

Expertly.

A thrust that would kill a man instantly.

But this one was already dead.

The soldiers shrugged and walked away.

Their leader lingered.

He was trained to follow orders.

He was trained to kill.

With a sword.

With a knife.

With any weapon at his disposal.

Including the bloodstained spear he now held in his hands.

He was not much in the habit of eulogizing either the living or the dead but whenever, wherever – *if* ever men gathered to give testimony to the One they called The King of the Jews, he, as an impartial historian of course, would ask to be called as a witness.

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REALTED QUIZZES

VOCABULARY

1. Crucified: killed by hanging on a cross
2. Disposal: available to
3. Sagging: hanging limp
4. Flogging: whipping
5. Calvary: the name of the place where Jesus was crucified
6. Strenuous: requiring a lot of effort
7. Securing: attaching, as with a rope
8. Marveled: filled with admiration
9. Insoluble: cannot be explained
10. Irritated: angry; annoyed
11. Humiliation: embarrassment
12. Thrust: stabbed
13. Shrugged: lifted their shoulders up then down to show they didn't really care
14. Lingered: stayed longer than was necessary; hung around
15. Eulogizing: praising highly
16. Testimony: to give testimony means to tell what happened
17. Impartial: fair
18. Historian: a writer of history; an expert on history
19. Witness: someone who saw what happened

1. Jesus and two others were hung on a cross and _____.

- A. Crucified
- B. Flogged
- C. Lingered

2. When a body is hanging limp on a cross, it is _____.

- A. Eulogizing
- B. Crucified
- C. Sagging

3. The soldiers were _____ with their leader for taking so long to give the order to break the legs of Jesus.

- A. Marveled
- B. Irritated
- C. Impartial

4. The leader _____ his spear into Jesus' side.

- A. Thrust
- B. Shrugged
- C. Crucified

5. The leader was a _____ to the crucifixion on Calvary so he could tell you everything that happened that day.

- A. Historian
- B. Testimony
- C. Witness

TRUE/FALSE

1. The leader had orders to kill two of the men who were being crucified.
False. The Centurion had orders to kill all three of the men who were being crucified.
2. The way to make sure the men being crucified would die was to break their arms. False. The way to make sure the men being crucified would die was to break their legs.
3. The leader was trained to kill with a sword and a knife. True.
4. The leader thought that Jesus was very brave. True.
5. The soldiers were angry that their leader stabbed Jesus with a spear.
False. The soldiers shrugged and walked away.

READING COMPREHENSION

WHAT IS THE MAIN IDEA OF THE STORY?

- A. To show that if you are a leader you must always follow orders.
- B. To show the compassion the leader felt for Jesus.
- C. To show how many ways a leader is trained to kill.

WHAT BELONGS IN THE MIDDLE?

1. The soldiers broke the legs of one of the men on the cross.
- 2.?
3. The soldiers waited for the order to break the legs of Jesus.

- A. The soldiers took a coffee break.
- B. The soldiers broke the legs of another man on a cross.
- C. The soldiers broke the legs of someone who came too close to the crosses.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

1. When the soldiers broke the legs of a man hanging on a cross
_____.

- A. They got paid extra.
- B. The man could no longer hold himself up to breathe, causing him to die.
- C. The man could hang straighter and breathe easier.

2. When their leader thrust his spear into the side of Jesus, the soldiers
_____.

- A. Thought that he was a very mean man.
- B. Thought that he was not following orders.
- C. Didn't really care.

INFERENCES

1. The leader thrust his spear into the side of Jesus because he
_____.

- A. Wanted to get back to his office as soon as possible.
- B. Admired His courage and didn't think he deserved any more humiliation.
- C. Thought his bosses would be pleased.

FACTS AND DETAILS

1. After his legs had been broken, a man being crucified
_____.

- A. Died within hours.
- B. Died within minutes.
- C. Lived two more days.

2. There were _____ other men crucified with Jesus.

- A. 12
- B. 7

C. 2

3. The leader was trained to kill with _____.

- A. Any weapon he could get his hands on.
- B. Only a knife.
- C. Everything except a spear.

4. The leader was so impressed with Jesus that he _____.

- A. Wanted to become a Christian.
- B. Wanted to write a book about Him.
- C. Hoped one day he would have the chance to talk about Him when He was crucified.

DID YOU KNOW?

The spear that pierced the side of Jesus became known as the Spear of Destiny and it was believed that whoever held it could conquer the world.