

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

JOHN 18

Michael Phelps is perhaps the greatest swimmer of all time. He was known for his ability to close a race.

And perhaps the greatest example was the 100 meter butterfly Phelps swam at the 2008 Olympics.

Throughout the race, Phelps, and the Serbian star, Milorad Cavic, swam neck-and-neck, but as they approached the finish line both men needed a partial stroke to reach the wall. Cavic chose to glide, but Phelps took an extra short-stroke, and drove hard into the wall. His lunge caused him to surge ahead of the Serb, beating him by one one-hundredth of a second.

Michael Phelps' narrow victory was not just an example of his unparalleled skill as a swimmer, but it showed his extraordinary determination. When Michael Phelps needed it most, he was able to dig down deep inside, and find a little something extra to finish well.

And this was like our Lord. Jesus is **the greatest finisher** of all time! For 3½ years He ran His race faithfully - but in the last hours when all the forces of hell came against Him Jesus found an extra kick.

He drove hard to the end, and left nothing undone.

In John 17:4 Jesus prayed to the Father in heaven, "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do." His final words from the cross echo across the ages, "It is finished."

And this should encourage us... Jesus finishes what He starts - and that includes His work in our lives.

Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will complete it." What Jesus starts He finishes. He has a perfect follow through. As John stated so well back in 13:1, "(Jesus) loved (His disciples) to the end."

Chapter 18, "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered." Let's start tonight with a geography lesson.

Jerusalem is made up of five hills... To the north, there is Mount Scopus. To the east the Mount of Olives. To the south Mount Ophel. To the west Mount Zion. And in the center Mount Moriah or Temple Mount.

Three valleys are between Jerusalem's mountains: west of Mount Zion is the Hinnom Valley... between Mount Zion and Ophel is the Tyropoeon Valley (or as it was called, *The Valley of the Cheesemakers*)... and between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives was the Valley of Jehoshaphat or the Kidron Valley.

Here's an overview of Jesus' movements over His last night... He and His disciples ate Passover in the Upper Room on top of Mount Zion... He then walked east, across the city and the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane, on the slope of the Mount of Olives... There He'll be arrested and led back to Mount Zion, to the house of the High Priest Caiaphas...

He'll then be turned over to Pilate, who occupies the Fortress of Antonio on the Temple Mount... From there He's shuttled back to Mount Zion and the palace of King Herod... Herod sends Jesus back to Pilate at the Fortress... Finally, Jesus is scourged and forced to carry the cross northward toward Mount Scopus, where He's crucified on the top of Mount Moriah...

Understand, the whole Old City of Jerusalem is less than one square mile. Psalm 122:3 says correctly, "Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together."

Jerusalem is a tight squeeze. It's a cramped city.

Whenever we take our tours, we stop on the top of the Mount of Olives and I point out the path Jesus traveled the final hours before His crucifixion. It's one of those moments when the light clicks on in your head. You see firsthand the geography - *the proximity of the sites* - and you realize how all of Jesus' movement took place in such a short time-span.

In verse 1 we're told Jesus and His men crossed "*the Brook Kidron.*" It's actually only a brook in the rainy season. The rest of the year it's a dry, dusty gulch. *Yet the brook in the valley is full of symbolic significance.*

When King David was betrayed by his son, Absalom, and friend, Ahithophel, he evacuated the city crossing the Kidron... It's interesting, both David's betrayers died dangling from a tree. Absalom's hair got caught in a branch. Ahithophel was suicidal and hung himself.

This story may've replayed itself in the mind of *the Son of David* as He crossed the Kidron. Jesus was also rejected by

his brothers and will be betrayed by His close friends. To me, it's more than ironic that Judas also ended his life hanging from a tree.

The word "*Kidron*" means "*dark, shadowy, gloomy.*"

The brook was polluted with run-off from the Temple sacrifices and usually its waters carried away the blood of lambs and goats. Imagine Jesus crossing the dark, blood-stained brook. I'm sure it reminded Him that not only was He about to be betrayed - but it also spoke to Him of the sacrifice that would occur the next morning.

Verse 1 tells us Jesus "*went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden...*"

Today, and even more so in the first century AD, the Mount of Olives is adorned with olive trees.

And there is an ancient garden just above the valley that contains a grove of olive trees. The garden once had a press that squeezed the oil out of the olives. "*Gethsemane*" means "*oil press or place of crushing.*"

Olive oil production in ancient Israel was a three-fold process. The initial crushing yielded the purest oil - the virgin oil. The olives were squeezed under the weight of a huge millstone. The liquid run-off was used to fuel the flame of the Menorah, and as holy anointing oil.

The olive skins that were left made a paste that was gathered on burlap and crushed a second time. This oil became a lubricant and was used for healing.

The leftover pulp was used as soap for cleansing.

And here's a picture of Jesus' final hours. At His initial crushing, **Gethsemane**, He acts as our anointed High Priest. He intercedes for us - prays for our unity.

At **Gabbatha**, or Pilate's Pavement, Jesus pressed again. He was scourged. The Romans turned Jesus' back and body into pulp. Isaiah reads, "**by His stripes we are healed.**" His suffering has become our healing.

And finally, the leftover pulp was taken to **Golgotha** where Jesus was crucified for our cleansing. For a third time He was crushed to wash away our slimiest sins.

It's interesting, earlier in the Garden - *aware of His future and the three-fold crushing of the olive* - Jesus prayed **three times**, "**not My will, but Yours be done.**"

Verse 2, "**And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples.**"

This garden was a hangout for Jesus and His men in Jerusalem. It's a favorite place of many pilgrims today.

Walk down the Palm Sunday road and the Garden of Gethsemane is on both sides of the street. To the south there's a church and in the courtyard you'll find 2000 year old trees, under which Jesus may've prayed.

North of the road is a private garden. Slip the gate attendant a few shekels and he'll let your group enjoy a time of prayer and solitude... To me, this garden is holy ground. Imagine praying in the very place where Jesus began to be crushed and squeezed for you and me.

And of course, Judas knew this place. He figured this was where Jesus and His disciples would camp. “Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.”

The word translated “*detachment*” is the equivalent of the Latin “*spira*” - which referred to a Roman military division. A “*spira*” numbered between 200 and 600 troops. This posse was made up of the Temple police.

And notice they come armed. They have “*weapons.*”

Why were they so afraid? Judas is spearheading 200 guards armed with spears. Are they fearful of a preacher and some fishermen-turned-disciples?

“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him...” What a fascinating insight - nothing that happens this night that catches Jesus by surprise.

He is in control throughout the whole ordeal. He went “forward and said to them, “Whom are you seeking?”

This was to defend His disciples. Jesus didn’t want them arrested too. He knows the issues the Jews have are with Him - not them. He’s protecting His disciples.

“They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am He.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, “I am He,” they drew back and fell to the ground.”

Here’s a miracle only John mentions. The power of Jesus’ presence physically bowled them over. They were “flooded”

literally - "*fell to the ground.*" And notice the phrase Jesus uses to address them, "*I am He.*"

This was His claim to deity. In Exodus 3:14 Yahweh identified Himself to Moses from the burning bush, with the name, "*I am Who I am.*" For Jesus to use the same name it was like shooting them with a *stun gun*. It knocked them on their backs. And let me say, the force of Jesus' presence still has a flooring effect at times.

Throughout Scripture when people come in contact with God they tend to hit the deck. *Yet there's an important distinction...* An *unbeliever will always fall backwards*, whereas a *believer will fall forward*.

With an unbeliever God has to bend a stiff-neck, or break a stubborn backbone - while a believer drops to their knees and bows to their face. Don't *fall* for what the charismatic groups refer to as "*slain in the Spirit.*"

The evangelist woos you into a trance-like numbing, then he slaps your forehead. The suggestion is for you to tumble backwards into the arms of the catchers.

People who advocate this practice use this verse as a proof-text for their phenomena, but *this event* and *their event* are two entirely different experiences.

Verse 7, "*Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."*

Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have

lost none." Again, what Jesus seems to care about most are His disciples.

He's about to be arrested, tried, tortured, and crucified - but His priority is the safety of His followers.

"Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." Brave, but an impulsive Peter, is trying to protect Jesus - *while Jesus is protecting Peter*. You'll save yourself headaches if you remember Jesus doesn't need us to protect Him.

Jesus is a big boy! He doesn't need us. He can take care of Himself. He has every situation under control.

Peter was the one who was out of control.

Perhaps Malchus was the first to lay a hostile hand on Jesus. When Peter saw it, he jumped up, grabbed his sword, and went to chop off Malchus' head. At the last second Malchus turned and Peter clipped his ear.

It's Luke, the physician, who adds, **"(Jesus) touched his ear and healed him."** Jesus cleans up Peter's dirty work... Jesus loved Malchus. He's about to die on the cross for Malchus. He doesn't want him injured now.

It's provocative that the last miracle of Jesus' earthly ministry was to heal a wound inflicted by one of His own disciples. And sadly, that's the miracle He's had to repeat over and over for 2000 years. **Well-meaning saints, like you and me, too often take up a sword to fight, and forget their Master took up a towel to serve.**

Verse 11, "Then Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?" Peter stands there holding a sword in his hand, while Jesus has a cup in His hand.

His cup is sloshing over with pain and rejection. He's about to drink it deeply. Peter on the other hand, knows nothing about the victories that are won through suffering. All he understands are blades and swords.

It's been said, "Peter fought the wrong enemy, used the wrong weapon, had the wrong motive, and achieved the wrong result." Jesus didn't come to crush His enemies, but to love them and die in their place.

Abraham Lincoln once said, "The only way to truly get rid of an enemy is to turn him into a friend." This was Jesus' strategy. He loves His enemies and wants to turn them into friends. This should be our objective.

Paul told the Corinthians, "Our weapons are not carnal, but spiritual." Peter chose the right weapon on the day of Pentecost. He took another sword - this time the "the Sword of the Spirit" - the Word of God. Peter spoke the truth in love and 3000 souls were saved.

Verse 12, "Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him." They handcuffed the Son of God.

Jesus came to set us free from *the chains* of sin, and guilt, and addiction, and death. We said, "thanks to Jesus" by slapping a ball and chain around His ankle.

“And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year.” In a political maneuver Rome had stripped the office of High Priest from Annas in 15 AD, and made his son-in-law Caiaphas the acting head of Judaism.

But Annas was still a very powerful person in the Jewish community. He was first to interrogate Jesus.

Jesus will actually be tried five times over the next few hours... Once before Annas - then Caiaphas and the Jewish Sanhedrin (or Supreme Court) - then by Pilate - by Herod - and finally, by Pilate again. Two times in *religious court*, and three times in *civil court*...

Today in Jerusalem you can visit Caiaphas' house, and the dungeon where Jesus was held on this night. You can even see the place where He was chained.

“Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”

This is a reference to the accidental prophecy Caiaphas uttered. We studied it earlier in John 11:50.

Verse 15, “And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple.” The unnamed disciple was probably John - our author. John does this often. Due to his humility he refers to himself in the third person.

“Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.”

Evidently, John had priestly connections. He was able to pull some strings to get he and Peter into the courtyard where

they could watch the trial of Jesus. *It turned out to be a heartbreaking experience...*

Some scholars believe this unnamed disciple was Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. They both were priests with connections to the Jewish hierarchy. We're actually not sure as to the identity of this "*disciple.*"

At first, "Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in." He's led into the courtyard by a little girl.

"Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?" (Peter) said, "I am not." U oh, *Strike One!*

"And the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves." Early spring in Jerusalem, the nights get chilly. "And Peter stood with them and warmed himself." That's when the scene shifts back to the trial.

The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine." Jesus answered him, "I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask **Me?**

Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said." The ministry of Jesus wasn't some clandestine operation. All He had done and all He had said was done openly and publicly.

It's been said, "Deceit must have clothes, but truth loves to go naked." Truth has nothing to hide. The truth Jesus taught, He laid out for everyone to scrutinize.

On numerous occasions the Jewish leaders had sent delegations to listen to Jesus and ask Him questions.

By now they were experts in what Jesus had done and said. Their current questioning wasn't to discern more info or derive a verdict, it was to find a reason to accuse Jesus and justify their desire to execute Him.

Verse 22, "And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?" The High Priest was like a Jewish Pope. He had tremendous authority and supposedly a hotline to God.

He was usually addressed with a string of accolades and flatteries. But here, unlike everyone else, Jesus refuses to kiss-up. He speaks bluntly. Jesus is unimpressed by credentials, and office, and reputation.

"Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"

Jesus is appealing to standard Jewish legal practice.

In a Jewish trial, both sides had the opportunity to present witnesses. The fact Jesus is being accused, without being allowed to offer a single witness is a sure sign He's being railroaded. Here He asks for a fair trial. Annas ducks the question and passes the buck. "Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest."

In verse 25 the scene shifts again from the trial inside the house, back to the courtyard and to Peter.

“Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, “You are not also one of His disciples, are you?” He denied it and said, “I am not!” One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, “Did I not see you in the garden with Him?” O no, *Malchus has a cousin!*

Here’s a relative after revenge... maybe he’s got a sword! This time Jesus might not be around for a reattachment. *And Peter panics... His faith is overwhelmed by his fear.* Verse 27, “Peter then denied again...” *How many times was this?* It was the **third**.

“And immediately a rooster crowed.”

One night, Mack and I were watching the evening news when we heard of the death of 96 year-old, Kermit Tyler. He was an Air Force pilot stationed at Pearl Harbor. Tyler was manning the radar on the morning of December 7, 1941. An arrival of a group of B17 bombers from the mainland was scheduled that morning - so when Tyler saw the large blip on the radar screen he said to a co-worker, “Don’t worry about it.”

Tyler was new to his job, and planes from San Diego were expected. But the radar blip turned out to be the first wave of Japanese fighters and bombers. The quote, “*Don’t worry about it,*” has gone down in infamy.

When the news was over, Mack turns to me, and says, “Wow, how would you like to live your life with that mistake on

your resume?" I can think of only one failure that would be worse... *Peter denied His Lord!*

Luke tells us that after the rooster crowed, "**Peter went out and wept bitterly...**" In a sense, *Peter's denial* was not a much different than *Judas' betrayal*.

We don't know what motivated Judas, but likely it wasn't fear. Peter proved a coward. Imagine the scar Peter could've carried for the rest of his life. The guilt was so heavy Judas couldn't bear it, and killed himself.

But the risen Lord will have mercy on Peter - and Peter will show heartfelt repentance - and Jesus will re-commission Peter. He was restored to the point where **now, a rooster crow signals the dawning of a new day.**

Verse 28 tells us, "**Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning.**"

The Latin word "***Praetorium***" referred to the Roman headquarters in Jerusalem. It was located on the northwest corner of the Temple Mount platform. It was a military compound called the ***Fortress of Antonio***.

If an uprising occurred among the Jews in Jerusalem it would probably start in the Temple. This is why the Romans wanted a presence nearby to monitor what was happening - and troops in place... just in case.

During the Passover, Pontus Pilate, the Roman Governor, journeyed to Jerusalem from his home base in Caesarea on the Mediterranean. Apparently, Pilate stayed in the Antonio when he was in Jerusalem.

He must've slept in the Fortress that night, since Jesus arrived in the wee hours of the morning.

Understand, the Jews involved Pilate only because it was necessary. This was a marriage of convenience.

For centuries the Jews had executed people for capital crimes and blasphemy - death by stoning.

But in 19 AD the Romans stripped the Jews of their right to capital punishment. By the time of Jesus all executions were now carried out by the Romans.

Normally, the Jews hated Pilate, and Pilate hated the Jews. Pilate had zero respect for Jewish religion and tradition. He was uncooperative at best. The Jews had even sent formal complaints to the Emperor in Rome.

Pilate's job was to keep the peace, and placate the Jews. At the time, he was inclined to work with the Jews, *and do them a favor*. If Pilate scratched their back; perhaps in the future, they would scratch his...

The Jews bring Jesus to Pilate, "But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover." This is what the Jews thought of the Romans. *They would never be under the same roof with an unclean Gentile.*

The Jews believed sin was a communicable disease.

Enter the house of a Gentile, and you would be contaminated. They were especially cautious at Passover. Earlier that week they had rid their houses of leaven. An Orthodox Jew who entered a house that had not been purged

of leaven would be excluded from celebrating the most important feast of the year...

Of course, it didn't matter to the Jews if they killed the Son of God. *But let's not set foot in an unclean house.* This is how blind the Jews were to the truth.

“Pilate then went out to them...” This Pilate was an interesting character study. When the Roman Governor crawled out of bed that morning he had no idea the enormous decision he'd face before the day was done.

What he thought was another day at the office turned out to be the most colossal day in human history.

And this happens at times. When you least expect it, you can be presented with an enormous challenge. Suddenly, you face a life-changing opportunity.

Sad to say, Pilate failed to rise to the challenge.

Pilate's initial approach to the Jews was curt, and formal, and routine, **“And (he) said, “What accusation do you bring against this Man?”** Pilate will soon discover there's nothing routine at all about this case.

It's unlike any decision he would ever have to make.

Pontus Pilate's encounter with Jesus that Passover, ended up shaping his life for both now and eternity.

When the Jews respond, they don't really have an accusation. **“They answered and said to him, “If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.”** The Jews try to intimidate the governor.

They're saying, *"you should take us our word! We wouldn't be insisting on His death if He wasn't evil."*

"Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law." This was his first attempt to pass the buck, but he had no idea they wanted a death sentence. "Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," *(that's obviously what they were after)* - but God had His purposes as well, *that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die.*"

In reality, Messiah's death by Roman crucifixion was a fulfillment of Scripture. Jesus had said earlier in John, *"If I am lifted up..."* - He's speaking of **the cross**.

Despite the Jewish tradition of stoning, the OT was consistent with its prediction that Messiah would hang from a tree. Psalm 22 described His crucifixion 1000 years before the Persians even invented crucifixion.

Throughout this trial the Jews and Pilate think their calling the shots, yet they're just pawns in God's plan.

Verse 33, *"Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him (with a penetrating question that had to have probed deep into Pilate's heart), "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this about Me?" Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"*

Pilate is a politician. He's a secular Roman. He hates being pulled into a religious squabble. *Like people today, he doesn't want to think about spiritual issues.*

Verse 36, "Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

The Kingdom of God isn't a political entity. It has no thrones, or palaces, or armies, or even borders. It comes without pomp and circumstance. Jesus is King over a spiritual kingdom - not a physical, tangible one.

Thus, His kingdom operates according to spiritual principles. Jesus' Kingdom is not about law, and force, and politics, and power plays, and taxation - *which were the pillars of Rome - things Pilate understood.*

The modus operandi in the kingdom of Jesus is love.

Jesus is a king who *gains by giving* - and *conquers by serving* - and *seizes by sacrificing*. Jesus' kingdom is based on *truth* rather than *brute force* - *mercy* rather than *muscle* - *forgiveness* rather than *resistance*.

Caesar was King of Rome. Jesus is King of hearts.

"Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And here Pilate echoes the cynicism of the Roman philosophers.

The Greeks and Romans believed in truth - they just disagreed on what it was. In contrast, today, we have so-called "philosophers" who deny its very existence. We're told there is no such thing as absolute truth.

It's interesting how our modern world is overloaded with facts. Click a search engine - there's info galore. Yet in the midst of the facts, we've lost sight of truth.

It's ironic, Pilate asks, "*What is truth?*" to the only person who could ever really solve the riddle, yet Pilate doesn't even give Jesus an opportunity to respond.

Don't give up on your quest for truth until you've listened to the one Person with the answers. Jesus said earlier, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life.*"

We're told, "*And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, 'I find no fault in Him at all.'*" Pilate literally jerks away from Jesus as if he was afraid to let Him answer. Francis Bacon commented on it this way. He wrote, "*What is Truth? Said jesting Pilate; and would not stay for an answer.*"

Pilate seemed afraid of the truth. Another author puts it this way, "*The truth that makes men free is for the most part the truth which men prefer not to hear.*"

Place Pilate under a magnifying glass and his thinking gets clearer. Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, but for fear of the

Jews he refused to release Him. **With the truth he did know, he lacked the courage to obey.**

This is the secularist and humanist's problem today. It's not that truth doesn't exist, it most certainly does - **but *living it* requires more courage than *denying it!***

In verse 39 Pilate remembers an old Jewish tradition.

He says, **"But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover."** Pilate was bothered by what he sensed in Jesus. Matthew gives us some additional information. Mrs. Pilate had been warned in a dream not to condemn Jesus. Pilate might not have fully understood Jesus' identity, but he saw enough in Him to know Jesus was no ordinary man.

The Governor had questioned the truth, yet while he was with Jesus he felt closer to the truth than he ever had before. Pilate knows Jesus is not deserving of death so he starts to look for a loophole - *a custom...*

And there was an old arrangement that allowed for the Romans to appease the Jews at Passover by releasing to them a prisoner of their own choice.

Pilate still doesn't realize the political ploy being played on him. He expects the Jews will ask for Jesus' release, especially when given an ugly alternative.

The other option he offers is a bandit, and bag guy, named Barabbas. So Pilate asks the crowd, **"Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"** And he's shocked by their answer, **"Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!"**

And the last line is what proves hatred is illogical... “**Now Barabbas was a robber...**” All Jesus did was heal, help, love, deliver, and stand for what’s right. But Barabbas broke the rules at the expense of innocent people. He was an indiscriminate thief and bandit.

Who in their right mind would unleash a Barabbas on society? Pilate figured even the Jews enjoyed the fact that he was off the streets. Yet this screaming crowd was ***NOT in their right mind***. Hatred and jealousy were in control. Pilate underestimated the madness.

This is where Chapter 18 closes...

A mob boss gets a walk, while the Healer is led away to be scourged and crucified. In one sense, it was a travesty of justice. In another sense, justice will finally be served. For your sin and mine is about to be judged.