

George Balko - Consider Him

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Our subject, our thoughts today are entitled consider Him. Of course, we're talking about our Master, our Lord. We have advice from the apostle in Hebrews, the 12th chapter, verse three, and I'm going to read that. We'll start out with that.

For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself. There's a comma there, there's a pause, lest ye be wearied and faint in your own minds or in your minds. It's never improper to consider our Master, and it's not by coincidence, by divine arrangement. It matched so well with our manna this morning that we don't want to just consider our Master and our Heavenly Father one day a week.

We want to do it seven days a week, and even at that, that. That pales in what we should offer to the Heavenly Father and to His Son. Now the apostle is giving us advice. He's saying you should do it, but you should do it as often as you can, especially when you're falling into troubles of your own.

And we know the life of sacrifice that we have this wonderful opportunity to pursue is filled with hardships, and that's the testings that the Lord has given us to see truly if we love him and if we will be faithful to Him, and today is no different. We're going to consider our Master today. We just came through the memorial season and I feel that this is.

We're still feeding off of that. I know I am, and of course, in line with the apostles advice to consider him as often as we can, and especially when we're down. We're going to do that today. But we had studies.

I'm sure you had a memorial study, as we did in our class, as they do across the country, and the brethren, the pockets of brethren, to remember the intricate, the details of the memorial, and of course, consequently, the masters being hung on a cross for us to pay that ransom.

I lost my thought for a second. Excuse me. But. But we wanted. We wanted to look at some of the details outside of the memorial and outside of his crucifixion.

I'm not saying not to look at them. We consider them all the time. But when we get into that season of the memorial, we tend to overlook some of the other details and great lessons that the Lord gave us at the end of his life, at the end of his ministry, and that's what we want to do today. We want to emphasize that.

I'm going to say in advance, this talk is not brand new. I didn't just write this one, and I have given it before. So my cousin sister Vicki reminded me that she just heard this. So forgive me for that.

And to anybody else that may have heard this, hopefully the Heavenly Father will bless this with some new gem for those who have.

Jesus, as we've studied and we know the scriptures relate that he was extremely busy throughout his life, specifically his ministry, but it really became intensely busy the last several weeks and months of his life. He had a lot to accomplish and as I said, many of the events that take place tend to be overshadowed and we overlook them. Not that they aren't of great value and lesson, but we tend to overshadow them with the study of the memorial, which by the way he did for us and he asked us to remember it because we couldn't have had a memorial. We wouldn't have had that

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opportunity to lay down our lives in his footsteps had he not did that, had he not given his life, and I think it's just, it's the mechanics of it that he wanted to be remembered in that sense that this is available to you because of what I am about to do, that's important.

We highlight that and of course is being hung on the cross. But these other lessons tend to get overshadowed. Now the wisdom of our Heavenly Father. I'm amazed. The more I learn and with each gray hair that I get and I study, I realize how wise our Heavenly Father is beyond my comprehension.

And he contained the life and the day to day activities of our Lord in those first four books of the Bible, the New Testament, the Gospels we call them, and he contained it in a manner that's very unique, and as we all know and realize from our studies, that each one of these Matthew, Mark, Luke and John looked at the situation but maybe saw it from a different vantage point. So what that does is it kind of gives us, when we cross reference them, it kind of gives us a three dimensional picture. It gives it depth on what the Lord did and the meaning for us to study and to learn.

And we're going to do that today and we're going to cross reference two individual books in the Gospels, and the first one is Matthew, chapter 26 and the other one is the Book of John, the Gospel of John, chapter 12. So let's go into our lesson and look at John, chapter 12, verse 1, and I'll read it for you. It Sundays then Jesus, six days before the Passover, he came to Bethany where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. Okay, so that's our starting point.

This gives us a time frame so we, our lesson is going to be entrenched around the week before the Lord gave his life on the cross. But it also tells us where he was at in Bethany, at the home of Lazarus.

Let's look at that location first. That plays importance in our study. Now, Bethany is just a small little town and it is in a larger area called Judea. Judea would be comparable, maybe not to the level of a state like Illinois or Pennsylvania, but it would be more equivalent, I would think. In my mind, I see it as more like a county.

Like Pittsburgh is in Allegheny County. West Newton is in Westmoreland County, and bear with me, I believe Chicago is in Cook County. Yes. Okay.

So anyhow, it's a larger area, and Jerusalem, and this is the city that would bear God's name. Second Chronicles. This is the most important city in the world, then and now and in the future. Located almost geographically in the center of that area, Judea.

That doesn't seem like it plays much importance. But it does because everybody has access to it. It's nearly equidistant in the lower portion of Israel. Okay. Bethany is just outside a couple of miles.

Okay. There again, does that seem to play importance? Does that have any significance? Yes, because it's within walking distance of Jerusalem. Now, Jerusalem at that time, we know because of God's desire, that was the hub or the center of all the Jewish faith and all the Jewish people.

Specifically, even after the split of the north and the south, it remained for the southern portion as the hub of all the activity. But they lived in a time of the Gentile rule, of the Gentile times, and they were under the Roman rule. So Rome being this was an important city, Rome placed a seat of government in the same town of Jerusalem, in the same city of Jerusalem, and then we have this

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little town of Bethany where Lazarus and Mary and Martha live a couple of miles out.

Now, I want to cross reference Matthew 26.

Six. I have now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. Okay?

So if you look at the content around the Scriptures, you'll see that in both in Matthew and both in John, these are the same instances. Okay? This is the same town. This is the same time frame as is in one, as is in the other. But I want to draw a point before we go any further.

So our Lord comes according to John, and in Matthew, he comes to this area just outside of Jerusalem, and what's about to take place, six days. He's going to give his life on the cross in six days, and where do we find our Master? Where do we find the Son of God?

We find him right there. Where his most severest trials, where he's going to be viciously nailed to a cross and give his life and offer to God as payment for that life of Adam, humanity.

You don't find him out in the outer country. You don't find him two nations away or another state away. You find him right there where he's supposed to be, and that just really lends to that Scripture in Isaiah, chapter 53, as a lamb led to slaughter, and I often thought of that scripture as a lamb led to slaughter, as he being led by the centurions, or he being led by the Pharisees and the high priests.

But I really have a different appreciation for that now, and I look at it more now as the Lord, the Heavenly Father, was leading him so that he can conduct his business for the salvation of you and I and all mankind. It's a beautiful thought.

Matthew 26. We'll look at verse two.

You know that after two days, the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. Okay, it's the same time. It's the same. Same events, just a different amount of days, and I actually, for a while, I struggled with that.

And I talked with a brother, Brother George Patius, some years ago about this subject, and I said, I can't grasp why John references six days, and the other references two days. He's Brother George. Look at the proximity.

He's in Bethany. He's right where he has to be. But he doesn't stay in the city. He's staying with friends. He's staying with brethren.

He's staying with the disciples who follow him and love him like family, and when he has to, when he has to do the Heavenly Father's business and conduct it, he takes that short walk into Jerusalem and then he comes back, and we know he was there several times, and we know that he was there on the 10th day of Niacin because he made that triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the fall of an ass. So that makes a lot of sense. It really explains a lot.

So what did they do? Well, he had shared this time with these individuals who loved him greatly, who appreciated his word, knowing he was the Son of God, knowing he was that promised Messiah, and he took this time to teach them and to converse with them and, and just to relax and be with dear ones, much like we are doing now.

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26, 6 Matthew.

Now, when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper, and we had read that already, Simon the Leper. We know this is the same place. We know this is the same area, and I and I wondered about that, why Matthew designates the house as Simon the Leper and the other one designates it as Lazarus Home, Mary Martha's home.

And I wondered about that. Is it possible that he was staying at two different houses or he was going back? And that is a possibility. But I looked up in the reprints and Brother Russell's thoughts on it, and he gave some really good, solid suggestions as to what he thought this might be on page 2743 of the reprints.

Simon the Leper, as he designates. Now, we know that the household, and we still do this today, a household is usually designated by the oldest male or man that's living there. That's just how it's been and still is today, with some exceptions.

So there was definitely some type of relationship, if indeed this was the same home. This is. There's some type of relationship to Simon in this house where Lazarus abode now, and it usually shows some type of ownership. But Simon is never mentioned again.

It doesn't tell us if he was healed. But I'm going to assume that if Jesus knew him, that he probably was, if he was a disciple. But it doesn't mention him again. So the assumption is, and Brother Russell says it's probably because he had died already, he had probably passed on, but there is some significance to that name.

And why does the Lord want us to know this? And Brother Russell's thoughts were, and I like this, that it's possible that this Simon was married to either Mary or Martha at some point. That just clarifies a lot. But he passes on, and then Lazarus comes into the home, maybe after, I don't know.

But now the three siblings are in the household together.

Go back to John, chapter 12, verse 2.

It says in there. Now, this is the one that relates six days before, and it says in verse two, there they made him a supper, and Mary, I'm sorry, Martha served. But Lazarus was one that sat at the table. Okay, so it makes it sound like as soon as they got there, six days before the memorial or before the crucifixion and the Passover, that they make this big bank with this big feast.

But the same thing is related to us in Matthew 26, two days before. So the timing seems a little bit off. These seem insignificant, but it actually has some bearing on it.

We're going to regress a moment. We had already Established, as you all well know, that the Lord was extremely busy the last several days, the last several weeks of his life.

He was now on a compressed schedule. He had a lot to accomplish, a lot to get done before he gave his life.

So what we want to keep in mind is that our Lord was here at Lazarus home just shortly before the account that we're studying now. In John chapter 12 and in Matthew chapter 26, if you go back one chapter in John chapter 11, we come about the event and the miracle of Lazarus when he was raised from the grave. I estimate, and it's just an assumption, I estimate it could have been just as

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short as a week before that, maybe two weeks. But it was short time and he was there.

Jesus was coming up to a wall. The time was ending. So as the account goes, and I'll just briefly touch on it, Mary and Martha, Lazarus sister, realize that Lazarus has gotten gravely ill. He's about ready to die, and Jesus is not in the area, and they send word through messengers.

Somehow they send word to the master, Lazarus is gravely ill. Please come back that you could heal him, that you could stop this death. They hope that it's really a testimony of their faith and their trust in the Lord. Because they realized this is the Son of God. We have seen him in many instances, heal the sick, heal the correct the lame, give sight to the blind.

We have seen him raise the dead. We know that he has this ability. We know he controls the power of the heavenly Father to do that. He can use it. They send this word, and in chapter 11, verse 7 implies that he's out of the area, probably a couple of days journey by foot.

But in verse 6, he quite plainly states, or it quite plainly states, that he's going to delay his coming back to Lazarus home.

It's obvious that God was assisting him. It's obvious that God was communicating to him, most likely through the messengers, the angels. The condition of Lazarus, verses 12 through 15, chapter 11. He explains to the disciples of Lazarus's condition. First he says, Lazarus sleeps.

Oh, that's wonderful. Yeah. Everybody that's sick needs sleep, and eventually he tells him Lazarus is dead. He likens that death to sleep.

Verse 15 shows that he allowed this to happen for the greater purpose, and what was that greater purpose? We're about to find out. You know, it had to be hard for our Master, this perfect man with perfect love and a desire to only please the Heavenly Father and do his will, and had the power of God in his fingertips.

And think of all the infirmities and the sicknesses that he saw, and now Lazarus, whom was not just an acquaintance, who was not just a disciple, but Lazarus was extremely bonded with our Lord and our Lord with him and that family, and he knew that it would be better for the lesson that if he allowed him to die than it would have been to go back and clean him and cure him of his sicknesses, and it hurt our Lord. That was another burden that I never really thought of what our Lord did for us when we consider him.

That he could have healed mankind at that time, but for the plan and purposes of the Heavenly Father.

He knew that time would come, but yet it had to be.

He knew that if he came after Lazarus had died and awakened him, the greater lesson and the value of that lesson would be much more important and have much more weight with his disciples than it would have been had he just come and healed him back.

It was hard for our Lord, and that's where that verse is in the Scriptures. It says when he came there to Lazarus home, he wept.

He wept even though he was the son of God.

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Even though he was filled with God's spirit and knew what was coming. It hurt him.

He comes to the home, he comes to the tomb. Lazarus had been dead for four days, and it's very descriptive of his condition now says he stinketh, which means decomposition had already started.

But that was important and our Lord did that for a purpose. Because in the past when Jesus healed someone, ok, that could have been. Oh, that was. He was never blind. Remember the case of the blind man?

Were you really. I was blind and now I can see. They asked his parents, is he blind? Yes, he was blind. They didn't want to believe it.

With the raising of Lazarus, they couldn't deny it. This was nothing less than a full blown miracle with the power of the Heavenly Father.

No trickery, no CPR, no arousing someone out of a sleep.

He had been dead for four days. Decomposition. So when he was awakened, this was everything. It was. It was a miracle.

No longer was he now a nuisance to the peoples and to the scribes and the Pharisees and the high priests. But now he's was a direct threat. I'm going to step off here for a moment. I was blessed with a privilege many, many, many years ago. I was a much younger man and we had a brother.

You probably know who he is. You probably heard his name. Brother Holliday from England. Wonderful, wonderful brother. I could still hear his voice in my head from some of the discourses he gave.

So eloquent so powerful with his message. He was on a pilgrim trip, and he had asked if he could stop in our class, West Newton, which was much bigger than it is now, and of course we said yes, and we were sitting there one evening, and he's giving this discourse, and I cannot remember the title of his discourse, but I do remember a portion of it.

I want to share that with you. Now. Brother Holiday's up there, and I'm following along in my seat, looking at the scriptures he's referencing, and he asked a question. He said, has anybody here ever seen resurrection?

Oh, God. That's kind of an odd question to hear. So I stopped what I'm doing in my research, and my eyes focused on him, as is everybody else in the class. He says, I have. So now I sit forward in my seat.

I'm not going to miss a word of this, and he relates a story, an account of his life when he was a young man growing up in England during World War II. He had a wonderful family, a wonderful life. But as we know, England got drawn into that and were nearly overtaken by the Germans. But they weren't.

And as the war raged on, they needed men to fight this war. He had become friends with a local fellow there that lived there, and this fellow was four or five years older than him. But he described it as almost a connection, like brothers, and they had very similar interests.

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And this friend of his looked out for him, and he just loved him like a brother, and brother Holliday was probably 14 years old. This young man was 18. He was called into service. So with great remorse, Brother Holliday said his goodbyes and he marches off to join the service for England, to fight the cause.

It wasn't long after, a short period of time later, there's a knock on this young man's family's door. A telegram from the service, and he says, unfortunately, your son was killed in action. Died heroically. News got back to Brother Holliday.

He was devastated. Crushed his heart. Such a good friend.

I'll never get to see him again.

So he's living with that news of the death of his dear friend.

It's a summer day, spring day. He's sitting along the side of his house, getting used to the fact that his friend's not coming back, moving on with his life.

And there's a lane that goes out of the town I pictured as a dirt path, a dirt lane, you know, ruts from the wheels of the carts. I don't know that it was it or not, but really My imagination. That's what I see. But this lane went out the town through a leveled area. No trees on either side, you know, a meadow, I guess.

And then eventually, at a distance, it goes into the woods and you don't see the road anymore. He's sitting there. He's relating this to us. He's sitting there and he's telling us. I'm looking around and it's natural to see people on their bicycles, not cars, but their bicycles are walking up and down this lane into the town.

He looks up and he sees some figures out in the distance by the tree line, and he's caught his eye. It's a little bit familiar.

So he looks away and he looks back. It's a little bit closer. He says, that's very familiar. The gate of that person that's walking is very, very familiar. So he stands up and he's looking, and he's looking intently.

And as he's moving closer now, and this figure from the distance is moving closer, guess who it was? It was his friend.

Obviously, it was miscommunicated that he had died.

I get chills thinking about this. He took off running.

He embraced that man, crying, as was he.

He said, that is the feeling that Mary and Martha had. That's the feeling that the world's going to have during that resurrection. Can you imagine?

Glory to God. Glory to God.

Powerful. That was so powerful. What an image to be able to feel that, and I can almost feel it, even though I can't. I can appreciate it.

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Back to our study.

Jesus performs this miracle, awakens Lazarus, knowing the result, and what's that result? He now knows that he is not going to be looked upon as a nuisance.

He's not going to be looked upon by the Pharisees and by the high priests and the priests. He's not going to be looked upon any more than a direct threat, and it states in this, in the following verses in chapter 11, they now seek to kill him.

That's the second point as we're talking, and considering our Master today, you have to remember there was no manual. Jesus didn't pick up the manual. He didn't pick up reference articles from Brother Russell and other things. He had to do this all on his own.

From the Old Testament.

He knew that he was going to pay that price, that he was going to allow himself to be taken and murdered. He gave his life. It wasn't taken from him, but he knew he had to set that up. But he just did this by raising Lazarus from the dead. Two important Lessons, two important things come out of that.

The brethren, Mary and Martha, felt that joy. But all the other disciples that witnessed this and heard about this realized that the Son of God has the power from God to raise the dead back to life. But also on the negative side, he now set it up where the adversary's accomplices will now seek his death. What a savior. What a savior.

And they sought his death immediately. Now, if this happened a week or so before he comes to Lazarus's home, as we're reading, six days before, he had to guide the timing too. So what does he do? He leaves the area. He allows the news to circulate amongst the brethren, amongst the hierarchy of the Jewish people.

And then when things calm down, he comes back into the area to finish what he had started.

So now this brings us back to our lesson. Both instances, Matthew and John relate that there's a feast. Now, we know the timing says one, says one, and one says the other. But it's two days before. We can put that together quite easily.

It's two days before the. The Passover, the memorial, and his death two days before, and Mary and Martha prepare this wonderful, wonderful feast, and I look at it, he spent these days, and there was.

It says the disciples came with him, and of course the family of Lazarus and I don't know how many others, but surely there were others coming and visiting. They were all coming into Jerusalem for the Passover. So their gathering is getting bigger and bigger and they have one primary speaker. What a convention that would have been.

He used this time. Now, remember, Jesus knows. Jesus is the only one that knows that in two days he's going to be nailed to a cross, nailed to a tree.

But he's sitting down in this home, relaxing, not showing any signs of stress, not showing any signs of fear. The Lord was with him.

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Chapter or verse? Verse 2 of chapter 12. John says that Lazarus is one that sat with them at the table. This is seemingly. Would want to most likely overlook this.

Oh, yeah, sure, that's his home. But give that a little thought. Lazarus, this was his home. I can tell you when we have guests for conventions or family. Sister Cindy, with my love, with all my heart, she'll say, George, you have to help me.

You have to help pick up the dishes, remind you. Yes, dear, I will, and I do. I try to. Sometimes I get a little forgetful and she forgives me for it, but I. I try to help her because that's a lot to cook the dinner, to serve it, to clean up.

Okay, well, it says Lazarus is sitting at the table with him. Wouldn't it have been more normal that Lazarus would have been helping them? Possibly, possibly. But now just think about what we discussed. Think about what we discussed in chapter 11.

Lazarus was recently dead, and the one who raised him from the dead is sitting at that same table. Why do you think they gave this feast? To appreciate what the Lord had done for them and to honor Lazarus who sat at the table with them. Makes a lot of sense.

Mary comes up to him and the Lord's sitting there. Now, that verse I read that says Lazarus is one that sat at the table. I looked up that word in the dialogue and strong's, and the word sat is actually has a little different meaning, but slightly different, and it implies more of a reclining. So I picture the Lord sitting there. I don't know if there was pillows, blankets, whatever, but they're all kind of lying.

And for some reason it sounds like they're after their meal, like we all do after a big Thanksgiving dinner. We all, all the guys at least want to go sit down and relax in front of the tv. But it sounds to me like they're, they're. They're relaxing. In Philippians 4, chapter, was that verse 11, the peace that passes all understanding.

The Lord had that peace, and he's sitting there, he's reclining. Mary comes up to him. So naturally, what would he do? She's coming right to him, in front of him.

So what does he do? He sits up and she has this oil spike guard, it says, and she anoints him on the head. But now that he's sitting up, where does that oil collect? On his feet.

And she humbly goes down with the highest portion of her body and cleans up the excess oil on his feet. What a show of love. What a show of humility.

Now, the difference in John and in Matthew with what takes place next, one tends to highlight the anointing, and the other one tends to highlight what took place after. That's that three dimensional look God has given us. But Mary used this oil, this perfume. It's called Oil of Spikenard. I looked up oil spiked art.

Oil spiked art is a. I don't know if they still make it today. Maybe, but it's a very costly perfume, and it's costly because of the process to make it.

In making this, they gather up rose petals, individual rose petals. They put pressure to them, they squeeze it, and they extract just the tiniest, minutest amount of oil. They have to do to get a vial. It takes thousands and thousands of rose petals and a lot of work to grind them up to get that oil. But it's extremely, I'd say, pungent.

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I don't know if that's correct. It's really strong. But it's a good smell. It's a good smell. I have to admit, when I asked this, my question.

We're going to follow up on this. But why does she have that? This. Very expensive. From the research I read at that time, it would have been equivalent to a year's wages of work.

It's a lot of money.

But she pours this on his feet. It's a show of love. It's a show of gratitude. Why? Because he just raised her brother to life.

He says. He gives. He mentions. He says, you unwittingly did this for my burial. She didn't know that he was going to die.

She didn't do this. There was no command. There was no request to do this. She did it out of the goodness of her heart.

When I think of it and I get that picture in my mind, I think of the anointing of the priest, which, of course, this is not the same, but it tends to remind me how the oil flows down to even us feet members. Beautiful. Fun.

The practice for interring a body at that time, much different than it is today.

They would purchase a tomb. Generally, it was hollowed out of the rock. That takes a lot of work. Maybe they did it themselves, I don't know, and then they would put the body in there.

They would wrap it in linen, which becomes apparent after decomposition, and then at the end, they would roll a big stone, much like our Lord did. What happened with our Lord in his tomb? They would roll a big stone to keep everybody out and keep animals and such out. But before that time that it became impossible to bear the smell.

They would want to go in and visit. They would want to linger with their loved one.

They would anoint that linen with heavy scented oils so that it would stave off some of the unpleasantries, and they could visit with them until it got unbearable. Maybe close up the two.

There was a use for that oil. In my mind, it answers that question. Why did they have that oil? She, most likely her and her sister put together what they had in preparation for the last few moments. They could view their brother Lazarus.

They didn't need it. So she has this full vow, just sitting around at the house, and she opens it up and she pours the entire thing, not holding back anything. Beautiful, Beautiful picture.

John, chapter 12, verses 4 and 5.

You and I and some there looked at this as a beautiful expression, an expression of devoted love to the Master.

But there was one there that didn't see it that way. There was one there that said, why would you use this expensive stuff? We could have taken the money and put it in the treasury, used it to feed the poor and the sick and whatever else they would have done with it.

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Completely missed that outpouring of love, the true meaning behind what she did. Who do you think that was?

It was Judas. Two days before the Lord's nail to the cross, what do you think happened? He runs out. He's so inflamed and agitated, he runs out. Where do you think he goes?

To the high priests? He goes to the temple, says, hey, I know where this man Jesus is going to be in two days, and he gave him 30 pieces of silver.

That's the third event that I wanted to mark as we're considering him. Yes, this was necessary, that Jesus be placed into the hands of his accusers.

But by doing this and allowing this to happen, Jesus made it possible for himself to be betrayed, which was necessary for him to offer his life for you and I. What a savior. What a savior. There's so many other events, brethren, that we overlooked because they're still valuable. We don't have time to offer them today.

But we do know that these items were, for the most part, totally they were misunderstood by both those adversaries against Jesus, but also by his closest ones because they did not have God's understanding, that spirit understanding.

But when you look at it, that shows and magnifies God's wisdom. Because they couldn't interfere with his giving his life. Peter tried. When he unsheathed that sword, when they come to get him, Jesus stopped him. He says, I could have legions of angels come defend me.

The wisdom of God.

So we can see God's wisdom throughout this. We can. I have such a great appreciation now, even more than before, and daily I grow in what our Master did for us. That he does deserve to be honored and glorified seven days a week, as does our Heavenly Father.

That he took care of even the slightest details. No manual. No manual. That he not only gave his life and in the most agonizing way, but he set it up himself so that it could have been given in that proper manner. He did this without any assistance except from the Heavenly Father and his ministering angels, so that he could die for you and for I and for the whole world.

So we'll read that verse again. Hebrews 12:3 closing thoughts. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Amen.