

# Tears in Heaven?

*“Jesus Wept” John 11:35*

*“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday  
and today and forever” Hebrews 13:8 (NIV)*

All followers of Jesus try to imagine what it is like in heaven and what we will do for eternity as we are gathered to be with God’s people from all ages. Will we just sit around playing harps and singing God’s praise? Will there be work to do? How shall we occupy ourselves?

There are numerous indications in Scripture about the present activity in heaven. The one I wish to focus on is this matter of how Jesus views the death of His saints from where He is in heaven.

When Jesus walked this earth He encountered people with many different issues. Looking at Him attending the death scene of His beloved friend Lazarus as recorded in John 11 there is a glimpse of His attitude in the presence of death.

What troubles us as we read the story is why He delayed coming after being told that Lazarus was ill. Jesus does tell us that the situation is for the glory of God. This is a clue as to the importance of this delay and what follows from it. The term in the Greek for Jesus weeping is not that of Mary the sister of Lazarus and the crowd. The word for

Jesus’ weeping means a quiet action. The word for the others is a wailing.

But, the point is that Jesus wept when invited to come to the grave. Was He weeping because Lazarus was in heaven and that distressed the people? Possibly, but not likely, the primary reason was because He knew Lazarus would be back within a moment or two after He stopped weeping and spoke the resurrection word.

I would suggest another reason that no one seems to have considered before. In light of all the glories of heaven described in Scripture, Jesus was about to bring Lazarus back from that to a sinful, sorrowful, pain filled world only to have Lazarus die physically again. In other words Jesus was about to have Lazarus go back to feeding on the crumbs of earthly pleasures instead of the amazing banquet spread for the saints in heaven.

Here then is the most probable reason for Jesus crying in the presence of Lazarus’ death. He wept over the removal of His beloved Lazarus from all the wonders and glory of heaven which Paul said was far better

(Philippians 1:23). Yes, He did have grief for His people who mourned the death of Lazarus, and some tears were likely shed over the pain they felt. When Lazarus reappeared both he and his family and friends would realise that this Jesus was Master of life and death. This miracle gave the people reason to praise and honour Jesus because of His clearly demonstrated power over this feared enemy called death.

For those Christians who grieve today, remember that Jesus’ heart feels your sorrow as demonstrated by His weeping at the scene of death in our text. Be comforted in the knowledge that Jesus is the same today with His people as when He walked among us. However, do not stop with the idea of your loss. Go on to meditate on the wonderful experiences your loved one is enjoying right now. Your loss is their gain. Take comfort from that reality and continue to faithfully serve the One Who raises the dead!

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