

Death.



Death man's final appointment on earth.

Death is not a popular topic of conversation and people in general avoid having to deal with it and either embrace the lie that everyone goes to heaven because God is too loving to send anyone to hell or they come up with another myth called re-incarnation.

However Jesus himself spoke much about hell.

Hebrews 9:27 states clearly

*And as it is appointed unto men
once to die, but after
this the judgment.*



Man's average lifespan.

One of man's greatest quests through medical science is to prolong life.

i. **Up to the flood** (1656 years) Over 900 years
Genesis 5

ii. **After the flood:** Reduced to 120 years
Genesis 6:3.

Then the Lord said, My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.

i. **Subsequent average:** 70-80 years
Psalms 90:10.

Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

ii. **In the Millennium man's lifespan is increased.**
Isaiah 65:20.

Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; the one who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere child; the one who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

Death.

➤ God himself ordained for man to die.

Genesis 3:22-24.

And the Lord God said, The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever. So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

➤ God instituted death as a blessing to grant redemption from this body that is under sin's curse.

Romans 7:23-25.

What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Romans 8:23.

we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.



Death.

- **It is not good for fallen man to live too long.**

Genesis 6:1-3.

Then the Lord said, My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.

- **You may think it gives a person more time to repent, but**

76% of Christians decided to follow Jesus Christ before the age 16.

85% of Christians decided to follow Jesus Christ before the age 21.

- **The older you get the harder your heart gets.**

Ecclesiastes 12:1

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, I find no pleasure in them.



Death.

- **Man and animals lived much longer prior to the flood due to the canopy around the earth.**

This means that both man and animals would grow much bigger as they would take much longer to reach their prime.

- **God reduced man's lifespan because of his wickedness.**

Genesis 6:11-13.

Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.

Before the flood murder was rife, there should have been billions of people on earth by the time of the flood, however archaeological evidence only points to millions.

Death.

- God instituted Capital punishment after the flood so that he would not have to destroy mankind in a similar fashion again.

Genesis 9:5,6 &11 &16-17.

And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being. Whoever sheds human blood, by humans shall their blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made mankind.... I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.

So God said to Noah, This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.



Death.

- God will punish man again for his wickedness because he breaks the Everlasting Covenant.

Isaiah 24:1 & 3-5.

See, the Lord is going to lay waste the earth and devastate it; he will ruin its face and scatter its inhabitants... The earth will be completely laid waste and totally plundered. The Lord has spoken this word. The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers, the heavens languish with the earth. The earth is defiled by its people; they have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.

Therefore a curse consumes the earth; its people must bear their guilt.

*Therefore earth's inhabitants are burned up,
and very few are left.*



Death.

- **God will punish man again for his wickedness because he has broken the Everlasting Covenant.**

2 Peter 3:3-7.

Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation. But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.



Death.

I don't claim to understand death and sickness, but I know that both are as a result of man's original sin.

- When I worked in Telkom before I went into the ministry, my Chief Technician had never been off sick for a single day in 25 years, but his wife died of cancer.
- **In Acts 8** Stephen was stoned to death but Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were delivered from the fiery furnace.
- God protected Job's life, but all his children died.

Incorrect teaching on sickness and death has destroyed the faith of some immature Christians and believers need to be reminded that faith does not make us immune to death and disease but enables us to cope with them and be more than conquerors

Romans 8:36-37.

As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

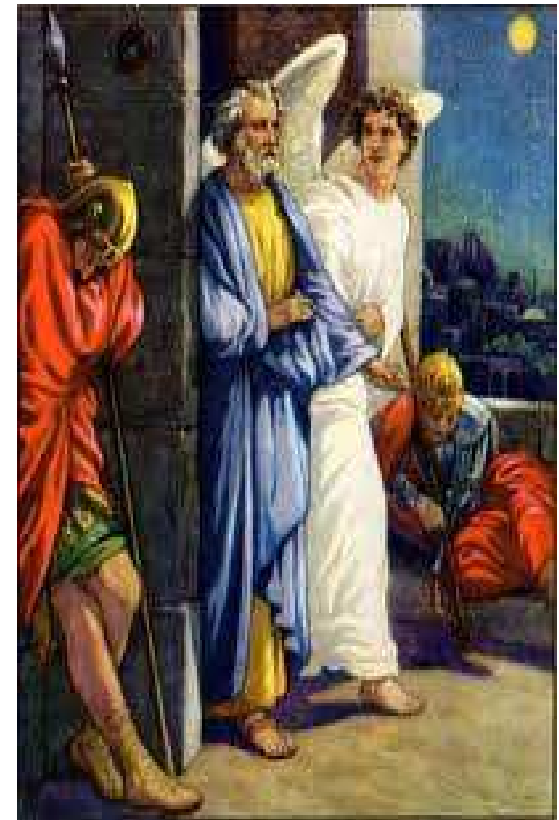
James killed but Peter freed.

Acts 12:1-4.

King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also.

Acts 12:5-7.

So Peter was kept in prison, but fervent prayer for him was persistently made to God by the church. The very night before Herod was about to bring him forth, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, fastened with two chains, and sentries before the door were guarding the prison. And suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the place where he was. And the angel gently smote Peter on the side and awakened him, saying. Get up quickly! And the chains fell off his hands.



Paul spent much time in prison.

Although the Apostle Peter was set free from prison by an angel, this was not the case for Paul the Apostle.

Acts 20:22,23.

Prisons and hardships are facing me.

2 Corinthians 11:23.

In prisons more frequent.

Ephesians 3:1.

Paul refers to himself as a prisoner of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Imagine if Peter wrote a book on

“How to get out of prison with Angel intervention”

Those doing prison ministry would have always recommended that Paul read it.



John was imprisoned and then beheaded.

In the case of John the Baptist, he got offended with Jesus for leaving him in prison.

Matthew 11:2-6.

When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else? Jesus replied, Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.



Remember that Jesus read Isaiah 61 in the synagogue in Nazareth.

Jesus had come to set the captives free.

Luke 4:16-21. (Isaiah 61)

He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.
Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.



Setting the captives free.

Setting the captives free from imprisonment from man was not the focus and thrust of Jesus ministry, in fact many Christians today are imprisoned because of their faith in Jesus and for sharing that faith with others.

John the Baptist was not going to be set free, in fact he would be put to death by Herod to honour the promise to his wife's daughter who had impressed him with her dancing.

Which prisoners did Jesus come to set free?



Setting the captives free.

Ephesians 4:8-10.

When he ascended on high, he took many captives and gave gifts to his people. What does he ascended mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.

Jesus told his disciples that the gates of Hades would not prevail against His Church.

Why?

Because he came to set the captives free, before he died on the cross no-one who died went to Heaven, they went to Hades where the righteous and the unrighteous were separated by a chasm that no-one could cross.

Setting the captives free.

Luke 16:22-26.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.

But Abraham replied, Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.



Setting the captives free from Hades.

Remember when Jesus died on the cross he told the thief next to him. Luke 23:43. *“Today you will be with me in paradise”.*

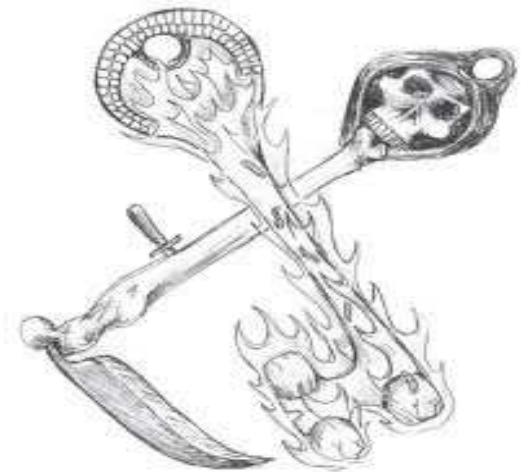
But Jesus was not going to Heaven, he was on his way from the cross to spend 3 days in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40. *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

Revelation 1:18. *I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*

This is why Jesus was able to say to his disciples that the gates of Hades would not prevail against the Church, because he was going to open those gates and set the captives free and the Church would never have to go there like the Old Testament saints had to, as the price of sin had been paid.

These are the captives referred to in **Ephesians 4:8.**

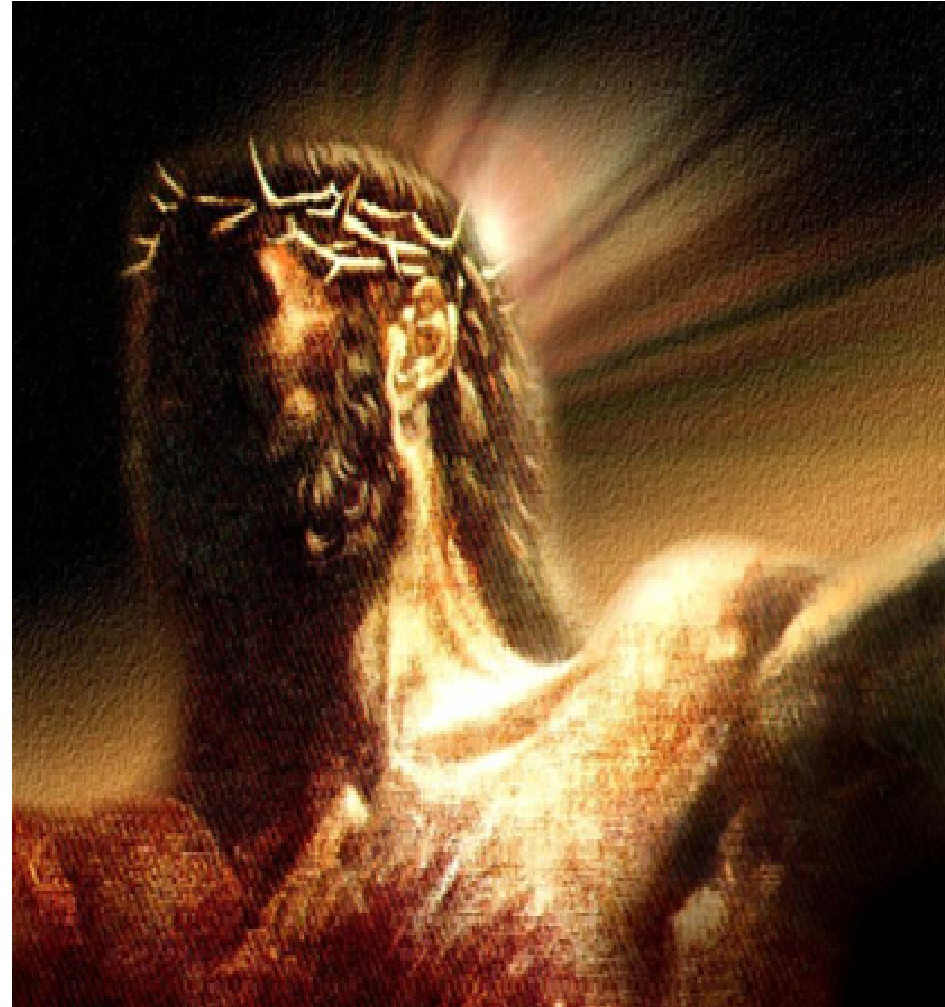


Setting men free from the fear of death.

Not only did Jesus set those free who had already died and gone to Hades, he freed those still alive but held in bondage by their fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14,15.

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death that is, the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.



Man's perspective on death.

Ecclesiastes 9:2-4.

All share a common destiny the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad, the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

As it is with the good, so with the sinful; as it is with those who take oaths, so with those who are afraid to take them.

This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. Anyone who is among the living has hope even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!



Paul's perspective on death.

The problem is that the modern day preaching of wealth and health and a life of blessing devoid of the suffering, that Jesus warned us we would have, has deceived people, and made the followers of the cheap Gospel prioritize this life above the next.

Philippians 1:20-25.

I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me.

*Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!
I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ,
which is better by far.*



Christians should not be afraid of death.

In fact the Christian walk starts with a burial.

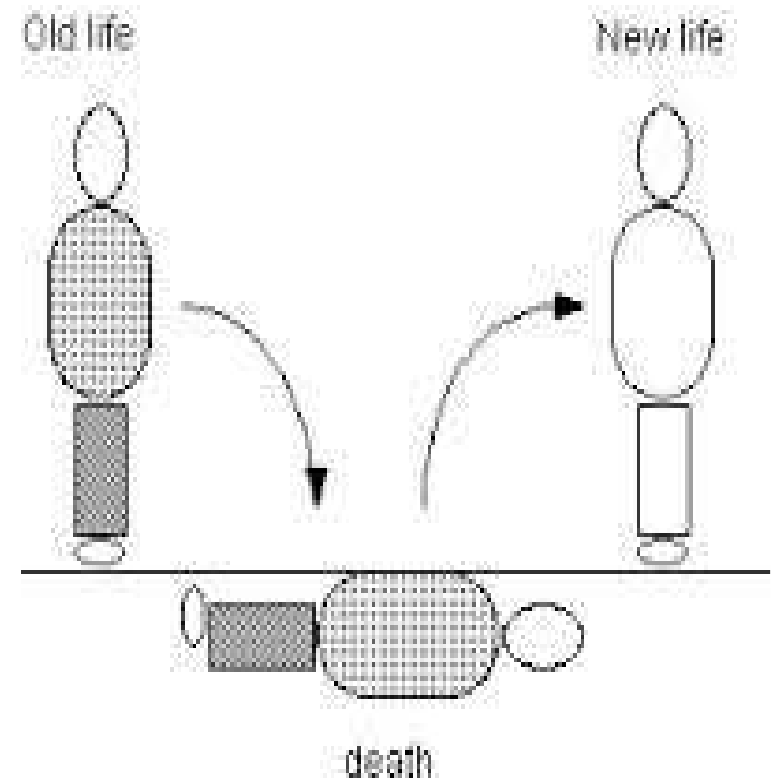
Colossians 2:12.

*Having been buried with him in baptism,
in which you were also raised with him
through your faith in the working of God,
who raised him from the dead.*

Galatians 2:20.

*I have been crucified with Christ and
I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.*

*The life I now live in the body, I live by
faith in the Son of God, who loved me
and gave himself for me.*



God sometimes uses death as a means of discipline for the righteous.

1 Corinthians 11:30-32.

That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

Acts 5.... Ananias and Saphira were struck down dead for lying.

2 Samuel 12:13-18.

David's child from Bathsheba Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. Nathan replied, The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord the son born to you will die. After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground..... On the seventh day the child died.

God sometimes uses death as a means of discipline for the righteous.

1 Kings 13:20-24. Prophet from Judah

While they were sitting at the table, the word of the Lord came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, This is what the Lord says: You have defied the word of the Lord and have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors. When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was left lying on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it.



God sometimes uses death as a means of discipline for the righteous.

Revelation 2:20-23. Letter to the Church at Thyatira

Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling.

So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

The wicked living long.

Manasseh

2 Kings 21:1-6 & 16-18.

Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was Hephzibah. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry hosts and worshiped them. He built altars in the temple of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, In Jerusalem I will put my Name. In the two courts of the temple of the Lord, he built altars to all the starry hosts. He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of the Lord, arousing his anger.

The righteous Hezekiah should have died at the age of 39 but God gave him 15 extra years, yet his wicked son ruled for 55 years.

The wicked dying young.

2 Chronicles 33:21-25. Amon the son of Manasseh.

Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made. But unlike his father Manasseh, he did not humble himself before the Lord; Amon increased his guilt. Amon's officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace. Then the people of the land killed all who had plotted against King Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his place.

Genesis 38:6-7.

Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the Lord's sight; so the Lord put him to death.

The righteous dying young.

1 Kings 14:4-5 & 9-13.

Now Ahijah could not see; his sight was gone because of his age. But the Lord had told Ahijah, Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask you about her son, for he is ill, and you are to give her such and such an answer. When she arrives, she will pretend to be someone else....You have done more evil than all who lived before you. You have made for yourself other gods, idols made of metal; you have aroused my anger and turned your back on me. Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from Jeroboam every last male in Israel slave or free. I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as one burns dung, until it is all gone. Dogs will eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the city, and the birds will feed on those who die in the country. The Lord has spoken! As for you, go back home. When you set foot in your city, the boy will die. All Israel will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried, because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the Lord, the God of Israel, has found anything good.

The righteous dying young.

Isaiah 57:1-2.

The righteous perish, and no one takes it to heart; the devout are taken away, and no one understands that the righteous are taken away to be spared from evil. Those who walk uprightly enter into peace; they find rest as they lie in death.



God's concern is spiritual death.

Luke 12:4-9.

I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

None of us can say that we will be alive tomorrow.

James 4:13-16.

Now listen, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money. Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Instead, you ought to say, If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that. As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.

Death.

Why did Jesus weep at the tomb of Lazarus?

I have heard different ministers speak on this passage and I know we can extract different truths from the same passage, but my persuasion is that Jesus wept not because Lazarus died (He was going to raise him to life and had purposely delayed coming until he had been dead for 3 days)

I believe that Jesus wept because they did not see beyond the grave.

Although we grieve at the death of a child of God, we do not grieve like the rest of men who have no hope.

Death for the child of God is rest, falling asleep in Jesus.



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