

John 11:35

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Jesus wept.

Analysis

This verse, the shortest in Scripture, conveys profound theology through simplicity: 'Jesus wept' (edakrysen ho Iesous). The verb dakryo means to shed tears, indicating genuine emotional expression. This moment reveals Christ's full humanity - He experiences grief, sorrow, and compassion. The context shows Jesus approaching Lazarus' tomb, surrounded by mourning sisters and friends. Though Jesus knew He would raise Lazarus, He still wept. This demonstrates that foreknowledge of resurrection does not invalidate present sorrow. Jesus enters fully into human suffering rather than remaining emotionally distant. His tears reveal God's compassion for human pain. This verse also addresses potential misunderstandings of Jesus' divinity that might suggest impassibility - God suffers with His people. The tears authenticate Jesus' humanity against Docetic heresies that denied He truly experienced human emotions.

Historical Context

The Jews observing Jesus' tears interpreted them as evidence of His love for Lazarus (11:36). In Greco-Roman culture, excessive emotional display was often viewed as weakness, particularly for men and leaders. Yet Jesus, secure in His identity, weeps openly. The Old Testament presents God as emotionally engaged - grieved by human sin (Genesis 6:6), moved by compassion (Hosea 11:8). Jesus embodies this divine compassion in human form. Hebrews 4:15 affirms that Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses, having been tempted in all ways. Early Christians found comfort that their High Priest understood suffering experientially. Church Fathers defended Christ's full humanity by pointing to this verse - He who

is impassible in His divine nature experiences genuine emotion in His human nature. The verse remains powerful in pastoral ministry, assuring sufferers that God understands their pain.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Why did Jesus weep if He knew He was about to raise Lazarus from death?
2. What does Jesus' weeping teach us about the relationship between faith and emotion in the face of death?

Interlinear Text

ἐδάκρυσεν	ὁ	Ἰησοῦς
wept	G3588	Jesus
G1145		G2424

Additional Cross-References

Luke 19:41 (Parallel theme): And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

Hebrews 4:15 (Parallel theme): For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

John 11:33 (References Jesus): When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,

Isaiah 53:3 (Parallel theme): He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Psalms 119:136 (Parallel theme): Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.

Jeremiah 13:17 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

Job 30:25 (Parallel theme): Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?

Jeremiah 14:17 (Parallel theme): Therefore thou shalt say this word unto them; Let mine eyes run down with tears night and day, and let them not cease: for the virgin daughter of my people is broken with a great breach, with a very grievous blow.

Isaiah 63:9 (Parallel theme): In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Jeremiah 9:1 (Parallel theme): Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!