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THEME SONG

For Those Tears I Died

*You said You'd come and share all my sorrows.
You said You'd be there for all my tomorrows.
I came so close to sending You away,
But just like You promised You came there to stay
I just had to pray.*

*Your goodness so great I can't understand.
And dear Lord, I know that all this was planned.
I know You're here now and always will be;
Your love loosed my chains and in you I'm free.
But Jesus, why me?*

*Jesus, I give You my heart and my soul.
I know now without God I'd never be whole.
Savior, You opened all the right doors,
And I thank You and praise You
From earth's humble shores.
Take me I'm Yours.*

Refrain:

*And Jesus said,
"Come to the water, stand by My side.
I know you are thirsty, You won't be denied.
I felt ev'ry teardrop when in darkness you cried,
And I strove to remind you that for those tears
I died.*

Words: Marsha J. Stevens (w. 1969)

Music: Marsha J. Stevens (w. 1969)



If Heaven's Not My Home

"This world is not my home. I'm just passing through, If heaven's not my home, then Lord what will I do?" We sing the song; and as Christians it has deep spiritual meaning, but what does it mean to people who are not faithful, or to those who do not profess any religion? Some people do not believe there is a heaven or a hell. Romans 3:23 says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and in Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; leave me, you who practice lawlessness.'" It is not wise to dispute the words of Jesus. One friend believes ungodly people will be burned, but it will be a flash fire. It will be all over in an instant and they will merely no longer exist. Matthew 25:41 tells us there will be eternal fire. Mark 9:43 calls it an unquenchable fire, one that burns eternally. It won't be a flash fire. It will be ongoing for eternity with no do overs. We are told of eternal destruction in II Thessalonians 1:7-9. "...when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God, and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ These people will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power," Jude 1:13 and Matthew 25:30 speak of outer darkness. We know God is light, but for those in punishment there will be "outer darkness." That sounds like the kind where you cannot see your hand in front of your face. If you have ever experienced that sort of darkness, you know how terrifying it can be. Matthew 25:30 speaks of weeping and gnashing of teeth. The account of the rich man and Lazarus shows we will have memory of our former life and those we influenced. We will realize

others we love could probably join us or may even already be there with us. I cannot imagine the agony of knowing that. When people say they cannot believe a loving God would not condemn anyone to that sort of punishment, I tell them He does not send them there. They choose that destination. The loving God in scripture sent many men to teach us what He expects. From the beginning of time, He has given man instructions on how to please him. He also sent his son to die for our sins. He allowed his son to pay the price of death on the cross in our place so we could join Him in heaven. Jesus told us he was going to prepare a place for us. It would be a place with many rooms, and Revelation gives us descriptions of glory. It speaks of gates of pearl and streets of transparent gold. We recognize this as figurative language, but it was the best John could do to make us realize how splendid and precious it is. In Revelation 21 we get a detailed description of what heaven will be like including "God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." We have a choice. We can choose to obey the instructions given in scripture and thus be allowed to be a part of that beautiful scene; or we can choose to disobey, and by doing so, chose eternal punishment. These facts being so, we can truly sing, "This world is not my home, I just passing through. If heaven's not my home, then Lord what will I do?" I pray we all choose wisely.

Wilburta Arrowood, Napoleonville, LA

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OUR SAVIOR

*When time began God had a plan
To send His Son to rescue man
In Mary's womb was God and man
They named the baby Jesus.*

*O precious God, O glorious God
I pledge my love to Thee, O God
The Son of God and Judah's clan
That child became our Savior.*

*They gave us John so he could tell
Who was the true Emmanuel
He did his job, he did it well,
So we could know our Savior.*

*O precious God, O glorious God
I pledge my love to Thee, O God
By spirit, dove and voice of God
John knew for sure our Savior.*

*Three years He traveled place to place
He healed and taught with love and grace*

*His plan included every race
But they must all believe Him.*

*O precious God, O glorious God
I pledge my love to Thee, O God
He gave them signs for all to know.
How could they not believe Him?*

*Some evil men said He must die
They shouted loudly crucify!
When Pilate in the end complied,
They crucified our Savior.*

*O precious God, O glorious God
I pledge my love to Thee, O God
It was God's plan that he should die
So He could be our Savior.*

*Some women came on that third day
They found the stone was rolled away
No body found, they went away
They knew not where to find Him.*

*O precious God, O glorious God
I pledge my love to Thee O God
When others left, one lady stayed
And met our risen Savior.*

*He picked some men that they might fan
His covenant to every land*

*And pass it on from man to man
That all might know our Savior.*

*O precious God, O glorious God
I pledge my love to Thee, O God
They passed it on in written word
That's how I found our Savior.*

*O precious God, O glorious God
I pledge my love to Thee, O God
And to Thy Son I pledge my all
For He is now my Savior.*

*Tom Baird served as a long-time elder at Rolla Church
of Christ, Rolla, Missouri. He now lives in Searcy, AR*

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In Him – Our Redeemer

*"Extra! Extra! Read all about it! Beautiful Mansion; Free
to All!"*

We all should be standing on the street corners yelling this to the world. As children of God, we know something that has been promised and fulfilled that can change the lives of our fellow man. We know the way to redeem the beautiful mansion.

In Genesis 12:1-3, we know God asked Abram—who became Abraham—to leave the home he knew. God promised to make him a great nation and...***in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*** Thankfully for us, Abram moved out in faith.

We know that God, who is faithful and cannot lie, fulfilled His promise. Jesus Christ (descendant of Abraham) was born of a virgin, grew in stature and wisdom, and set out to be about His Father's business. He lived a faithful life of service to the Father for us. Jesus was the perfect Lamb of God, and His blood purchased the way for us. As the song El Shaddai says, *"Your most awesome work was done, through the frailty of your Son."* Jesus redeemed mankind in His frail human form: The people who lived faithful lives before Him, and the people that put Him on in baptism and strive to reside in Him after His death on the cross.

Galatians 3:13-14 states *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

In Him, we have so much (Read Ephesians 1:3-14):
Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (the mansion in heaven)
Adoption as sons (a relationship with God)
Redemption through His blood
Forgiveness of sins
Inheritance
Truth and Wisdom
Salvation sealed with the Holy Spirit

Jesus Christ died for all mankind, for those we consider (man's thinking) to be good, and even, for those we consider to be evil and unworthy. The truth is we are all so unworthy by ourselves. We are all human and fall so very short. So how do others redeem their free ticket to get **in Him**: by hearing the Word, believing the Word, repenting from our sinful man ways, confessing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, being baptized (immersed) into the watery grave (in which you die to self, receive the spirit and new life), and by daily living faithfully. We know how to redeem our beautiful mansion. But more importantly, we know the Way to have a relationship with God, Almighty. Now, pass it on!



How Beautiful Heaven Must Be!

The above song can be found as No. 885 in our songbook, Songs of Faith & Praise. I love the words and wish we still those the old songs and hymns. It was written in 1920. Verse 1 and the chorus are as follows:

We read of a place that's called Heaven,
It's made for the pure and the free;
These truths in God's word He has given,
How beautiful heaven must be.
How beautiful heaven must be,

Sweet home of the happy and free;
Fair haven of rest for the weary,
How beautiful heaven must be.

I had a friend and sister-in-Christ who often asked me what I thought heaven would be like. She was anxiously waiting to go there. I had no answer to give her except, "I don't know." I just know it is going to be wonderful and beautiful, words that are **so** inadequate to describe it. No imagination can picture it. No one in our realm knows the wonder and awe of it. What I *do* know is that is where I long to be.

Genesis 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." 'The heavens' here refers to the sky or firmament, the first heaven. It is what we see when we gaze into the sky (Genesis 1:6-8). The second heaven is what we call 'space,' the universe. He is not referring to the third heaven, God's dwelling place. Just as Jehovah has no beginning or end, His home is eternal. In Matthew 25:34, Jesus says, "Come you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom of heaven prepared for you since the creation of the world."

Christians can only see heaven with the eye of faith, through scripture. In 2 Corinthians 12:2-7, Paul writes, "I know a man in Christ, who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body, I do not know. God knows. And I know that this man, whether in the body or apart from the body, I do not know—but God knows—was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell. I will boast about a man like that but I will not boast about myself except about my weaknesses. Even if I should choose to boast I would not be a fool because I would be speaking the truth. To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of satan to torment me." (NIV)

Paul is talking about himself. He doesn't understand why God allowed him to 'see' paradise, but he knows what he saw was so wondrous he would never be permitted to tell anyone. He could not express it in human language anyway! I cannot imagine what Paul saw, but it should give Christians even greater hope and yearning to go there.

Revelation 21:10-27 and 22:1-5 give us a glimpse of heaven in symbolic language. In 22:1-5 John writes, "Then the angel showed me the river of life as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each

side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light and they will reign forever and ever.”

To realize that I will some day go to that place blows my mind! To think that Jesus loved me so much He went to the cross and took my place so that I could have eternal life with Him. As I get older, I look forward more and more to going to my eternal home. My focus has changed drastically over the years from the temporary to the eternal. My prayer for all Christians is that our focus be changed from the physical to the spiritual. We must live in the world but not be *of* the world. None of us knows the hour of our physical death. 2 Peter 3:13 says, “But in keeping with His promise, we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.” Heaven is waiting for the faithful child of God!

Mary Anna Melton, Rolla, MO

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This World is not My Home

In the fall of 2006, my husband and I took our dream trip to Montana. We spent several days at Glacier National Park, something we had been talking about for years. Even though the weather was cloudy and overcast, we drank in the beauty of God’s creation.

Continuing our trip, we decided to drive up to the Canadian side of the park, which is called Waterton. It was beautiful, but I was deeply homesick. As I thought of home, it seemed I was **very** far from home. We drove up to Calgary and spent the night there. It is much like any big city in the US, but I knew I was a stranger in a foreign land.

When we turned our car southward to the US, I was eager to be back on American soil. We re-crossed the border at Wild Horse, Montana, which is about a two-hour drive from the nearest small town. Wild Horse consists of a half dozen structures, one of which is the US Port of Entry, which looks like an old gas station building from years ago. It was late September, and a strong, cold wind was howling.

Border agents examined our passports, glanced over the interior of our car, examined the contents of our trunk,

and asked a few questions. They took our papers and went inside their office very briefly. They brought back our passports and an assortment of Montana tourist information. More importantly, they welcomed us back to America. I felt like I was home, despite still being far away. Though we were still more than 1,200 miles from Rolla, Missouri, it felt so good to be back on American soil!

While we were in Canada, I was keenly aware that I am not a citizen of Canada. The Canadian people were not unfriendly, and no one treated us badly during our short visit there. It just was not home.

Many years ago, I found myself in another far country. Physically, I had not gone far, but I had spiritually wandered far from home. While I was in that far country, I dreamed of home. But I couldn’t seem to find my way back home. Eventually, I “headed home” in a spiritual sense, to my spiritual home (the Lord’s church), much like when we turned our car to the south and headed home from Canada. All the wondrous things we had seen there became less important than getting back home.

America is where I was born and have lived my entire life. For the past year, it no longer feels like home. I live here, but this world is not my true home. My home is in a far better place where I will be in the very presence of my Father—where there will be no loneliness, isolation, pain, sickness, fear, or tears and no COVID-19, which has isolated millions in this country. Just as I was homesick for my home country in 2006, today I am more eagerly looking forward to my forever home—Heaven!

Spiritually, my *“citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,”* (Philippians 3:20). Paul accurately describes in that passage the way I felt about coming home in 2006. I look forward to that glorious day when heaven will become my permanent home. Though the US is a wonderful place to live, it is not my home—I’m just passing through on my way to my eternal home!

Evelyn Waite, Rolla, MO

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