

The Last Enemy

Broken | Hope | Substitute | Raised

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Act I : Broken

Three, so indivisibly One¹; '*I Am*'² cannot not be³
Infinite, unchangeable, eternal Community
Self-determined, Self-sustaining, the heavens His love proclaim⁴
*YHWH*², the source, makes *matter* for the glory of His name⁵

Speaking to His greatness, His invisibility displayed⁶
Stars in a vast Universe; like grains of sand arrayed
In a myriad of planets, He one would finely tune⁷
To crown creation in the man with whom He could commune⁸

Created in His image⁹; designed to be complete in Him¹⁰
Matter and non-matter unified¹¹, in His paradigm
The unbodily inner; mind, will, and power to trust¹²
So wonderfully complex, that outer body made from dust¹³

Each unique¹⁴, creative, governing, with capacity to choose¹⁵
Until the day they broke the image¹⁶; cursed, their lives to lose¹⁷
First the inner separation; a withdrawal of God's *Breath*¹⁸
Outer degradation followed; life swallowed up in death¹⁹

'*Khesed*'²⁰ defines God's nature, so redemption was in plan
Before the foundation of the earth, before creation of the man²¹
But for His image to be restored; blood, sin's only wage²²
God's wrath against the stain that marred would have to be assuaged²³

Act II : Hope

From the oldest song of Scripture, there lived a most upstanding man
He was so severely tested, he lost everything one can
Yet he trusted his *Redeemer*; believed that after his decay
In his body he would see *YHWH*, on the final day²⁴

A foreigner living in a tent, looked toward a promised place
A city with eternal founds; a homeland in God's grace²⁵
Three Days journey to *Moriah's* test; to sacrifice his son
In believing God would raise him, he found a substituted ram²⁶

The shepherd-king knew when he died, in *YHWH's* house he'd live instead²⁷
He looked ahead to One whose body would not rot when dead²⁸
Snatched from the power of the grave, redeemed to life again²⁹
Lifted from the depths of earth; restored to honour then³⁰

One whose lips were cleansed by fire³¹, saw death in its demise³²
Those, in *YHWH* dying, would see their bodies once more rise³³
He foretold a '*Suffering Servant*', One crushed in *YHWH's* plan
Many descendants following, His life an offering for man³⁴

A rattling on a valley floor, an unfolding vision grand
Dry bones connect; an army dead, now standing to command³⁵
In time of anguish at the last; the Archangel yet unfazed
Those whose names the book contains, would have their bodies raised³⁶

Another spoke of ransom, and scorned death's victory³⁷
An enigmatic message of 'raising up' upon *Day Three*³⁸
And a reluctant messenger, trapped in a fish *Three Days*
Out alive at *YHWH's* word; a sign in His miraculous ways³⁹

Act III : Substitute

A second man broke into time; One of Heaven, not from dust⁴⁰
He laid aside His glory⁴¹, took on body⁴²; faced the curse⁴³
His name was 'God With Us'⁴⁴; the Person of God's plan⁴⁵
Exalted nature of the Son⁴⁶, with that of sinless man⁴⁷

In the aftermath of telling them He must be rejected, killed, then raised
Followers must die to self; at this they were amazed
Find life in taking up the cross: Jesus' astonishing advice
The whole world no gain at all, if loss of soul the price⁴⁸

A religious teacher sought Him, under cover of the dark
Be born again of *Spirit*, Jesus' startling remark
If He be lifted up, eternal life could be received
A Son given, a world so loved; for whosoever believed⁴⁹

Signs were much demanded, to authenticate the Son
He pointed them to Jonah, the sign of three already known⁵⁰
If they destroyed His temple, in *Three Days* He would rebuild
But they could not comprehend, for with darkness they were filled⁵¹

When the rulers and the lawyers argued death must be the end⁵²
They did not know the scriptures; and so He raised His friend
That friend would have to die again; life promised beyond death
For those of faith, alive in Him; bodies filled with His *Breath*⁵³

When His closest were most troubled, Jesus told them to believe
He was going to prepare for them, they would not need to grieve
In His spacious Father's house, where forever they would stay
Because He is *The Truth*, *The Life*, they'd surely know *The Way*⁵⁴

In those final precious moments; the talk, the walk, the meal
He would not leave them orphans, a truth they could not feel⁵⁵
Because He lives, they too would live, eternal life He meant
To know the *One True God*, and *Jesus Christ* who He had sent⁵⁶

Back to *Mount Moriah*, two thousand years along
At a place they called *The Skull*, another *Father* gave His *Son*⁵⁷
The forsaken⁵⁸, substituted *Lamb*⁵⁹, pure in every way⁶⁰
A great exchange, the battle won; death had had its day⁶¹

Act IV : Raised

Then on the *Third Day* He arose, first of a harvest great⁶²
'*Why look for the Living among the dead?*' the angel asked them straight
He appeared to them in body; Jesus proved He was no ghost
They touched His wounds, they fed Him fish, and did rejoice the most⁶³

As *Son* returned to *Father*⁶⁴, the *Comforter* was sent⁶⁵
Resident in the body, from where He first was sent⁶⁶
Deposit⁶⁷, guarantee⁶⁸ and foretaste⁶⁹ of glory to come
Adopted as God's children, joint heirs with Christ the *Son*⁷⁰

So when passing through the waters, we too can with Him die⁷¹
Our bodies united with Christ; bought with a price so high⁷²
Then just as He was raised, our *Eternal Life* begins⁷³
The old life dead in sin; the new alive to God again⁷⁴

But, the dying outer, the weight of glory can't contain
Even as the inner is renewed, the body feels the strain⁷⁵
It must be planted like a seed, until death is swallowed in *Life*⁷⁶
Then raised again, glorious⁷⁷; like the *Heavenly Man* on high

For now, we have this treasure in fragile jars of clay⁷⁸
Great expectations of transformation; beyond change and decay⁷⁹
When the earthly tent is taken down, for those in Christ no fear
Our time fused with eternity brings the *Redeemer's* presence near⁸⁰

Then, at the time the Father knows, when time will be no more⁸¹
Believers, once dead, with Christ return, His Kingdom to fully restore⁸²
The graves will open, bodies will rise; death cast in the fire⁸³
*For the last enemy to be destroyed is death*⁸⁴

Epilogue

In His Kingdom's '*already ... but not yet*' tension, we see
We *have been*⁸⁵, we *are being*⁸⁶, and regenerated we *will be*⁸⁷
May our spirit, soul and body be kept blameless in His sight⁸⁸
Our hope? The faithful '*God of Peace*' - the Judge who will do right⁸⁹

As we join Him in His suffering, as our bodies fight decay⁹⁰
We anticipate His presence, knowing there will come a day⁹¹
When we leave behind this body; it will be transformed we know⁹²
Last tears for those we leave behind; then no more tears for evermore⁹³

References:

- 1 Genesis 1:1-2, 1:26, 3:22, Isaiah 9:6, 44:6, Matthew 1:23, 28:9, Luke 1:35, 3:22, John 1: 1, 1:14, 10:30, 14:9-26, 15:26, 20:28, Acts 2:33, 10:38, Romans 1:4, 14:17-18, I Corinthians 1:21-22, 6:11, 8:6, 12:4-6, II Corinthians 13:14, Ephesians 1:17, 2:22, 4:4-6, Philippians 2:5-8, Colossians 2:9, Titus 3:6, Hebrews 9:14, I Peter 1:2-3
- 2 Exodus 3:13-15, Leviticus 24:15-16, John 4:26. 6:35, 8:23, 8:58, 9:5, 10:36, 11:25, 13:13, 14:6, 15:1, Revelation 1:8, Revelation 1:17
- 3 Revelation 1:4
- 4 Psalm 19:1
- 5 Romans 11:36, I Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 3:9-10, Colossians 1:16
Hebrews 11:3, Revelation 4:11
- 6 John 4:24, Romans 1:20
- 7 Genesis 1:1-7
- 8 Genesis 1:28-30, 2:15
- 9 Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6, I Corinthians 15:49 II Corinthians 4:4,
Colossians 3:10, Ephesians 4:24, James 3:9
- 10 Ecclesiastes 12:7, Isaiah 43:7, Ephesians 2:10
- 11 Genesis 2:7

- 12 Deuteronomy 6:5, Psalm 23:3, Ezekiel 18:20, 36:26, Matthew 10:28, 22:37, Romans 8:6, I Corinthians 2:14, I Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 4:12
- 13 Genesis 3:19, Psalm 103:13-14, Ecclesiastes 3:20
- 14 Psalm 139:13-17, Isaiah 49:16, Jeremiah 1:5, Matthew 10:30, Luke 12:7
- 15 Deuteronomy 30:19-20, Proverbs 3:5-6, 12:15, 16:9, 19:21, Joshua 24:15, Matthew 6:33, I Corinthians 10:13, Galatians 6:7-8, James 1:5, 1:13-16
- 16 Genesis 3:6-7, Isaiah 59:2
- 17 Genesis 3:14-19
- 18 I Corinthians 15:22, Ephesians 2:1
- 19 Romans 5:12-15, 6:23
- 20 *Khased* is a Hebrew word occurring 246 times in the Old Testament - 127 times in the Psalms alone. The word '*Lovingkindness*' was invented for its use in a 1535 translation of Scriptures. It described God's nature. Michael Card defined it as: '*When the person from whom I have a right to expect nothing gives me everything*' and I would direct you to his book:
Card, M. *Inexpressible: Hased and the mystery of God's Lovingkindness* IVP 2018
- 21 Matthew 25:34-40, Ephesians 1:3-6, 1Peter 1:19-20, Revelation 13:8, 17:8
- 22 Romans 3:25, 6:23, Hebrews 9:14, 9:22, I John 2:2
- 23 Romans 1:18, 5:8-9, Colossians 3:6, I Thessalonians 5:9, Hebrews 10:31
- 24 Job 19:25-27
- 25 Genesis 15:6, 17:1-8, Romans 4:3, Hebrews 11:17-19
- 26 Genesis 22:1-18, Hebrews 11:17-19

- 27 Psalm 23:6
- 28 Psalm 16:9-11, Acts 2:22-29
- 29 Psalm 49:14-15
- 30 Psalm 71:19-21
- 31 Isaiah 6:1-8
- 32 Isaiah 25:8
- 33 Isaiah 26:19
- 34 Isaiah 53
- 35 Ezekiel 37:1-14
- 36 Daniel 12:1-3
- 37 Hosea 13:14
- 38 Hosea 6:1-2
- 39 Jonah 1:17 - 2:10, Matthew 12:38-40
- 40 Romans 5:12-21, I Corinthians 15:45-48
- 41 Philippians 2:5-11
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- 43 Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Galatians 3:13
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- 45 Romans 5:8 I John 5:11-12

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- 47 Mark 13:32, John 1:14, I Timothy 2:5, Hebrews 4:15, I John 4:1-3,
II John 7
- 48 Matthew 10:37-39, Mark 8:34-37, Luke 9:22-24
- 49 John 3:1-17
- 50 Matthew 12:38-40
- 51 John 2:18-22
- 52 Mark 12:18-27, Luke 20:27-39
- 53 John 11:1-45
- 54 John 14:1-6
- 55 John 14:18
- 56 John 17:3
- 57 Matthew 27:27-65, Mark 15:16-47, Luke 23:26-56, John 19:17-42
- 58 Psalm 22:1, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34
- 59 Isaiah 53:5-12
- 60 II Corinthians 5:21
- 61 Isaiah 9:1-2, Matthew 4:15-16, John 6:47-48, John 11:25-26,
Romans 6:8-10, I Corinthians 15:53-55, I John 2:24-25
Revelation 21:4
- 62 Romans 8:29, I Corinthians 15:12-20
- 63 Luke 24:1-49

- 64 Mark 16:19, Luke 24:51, John 14:12, Acts 1:9
- 65 John 14:16-17, 14:26, 15:26
- 66 I Corinthians 6:19
- 67 II Corinthians 1:21-22
- 68 Ephesians 1:14
- 69 Romans 8:23
- 70 John 1:12-13, Romans 8:17, I John 3:2
- 71 Romans 6:1-11, Colossians 2:12
- 72 I Corinthians 6:12-20
- 73 II Corinthians 5:17
- 74 Ephesians 2:1-10
- 75 II Corinthians 4:14-18
- 76 I Corinthians 15:35-58
- 77 Philippians 3:20-21
- 78 II Corinthians 4:7
- 79 I Peter 1:3-6
- 80 II Corinthians 5:1-10
- 81 Mark 13:32
- 82 I Thessalonians 4:13-18

- 83 Revelation 20:14
- 84 I Corinthians 15:26
- 85 Ephesians 2:8-9
- 86 I Corinthians 1:18, II Corinthians 2:15
- 87 Romans 5:9
- 88 I Thessalonians 5:23-24
- 89 Genesis 18:25
- 90 Philippians 3:10-11
- 91 Psalm 16:11
- 92 I Corinthians 15:51-55
- 93 Revelation 21:1-9

Personal Note:

Through work, I am not unfamiliar with disease and death. We try medically to assist the body in the healing process. However, one thing all of us can agree on, is that we're going to die. Over the last period of time there have just been too many I know bereaved, and others that are suffering the ravages of broken bodies.

As Christians, our great confidence and hope is that we have 'by Grace, through Faith' Eternal Life. And we rightly focus on the 'New Life' we have and the redemption of our souls. But our bodies take part in regeneration too.

Walking the empty beach one morning, I came across a horde of beautiful shells, abandoned and casually strewn along the surf line. Seeing these mollusc exoskeletons

reminded me that they were once temporary homes. The bodies that had once occupied them now gone. I took a few shells home to photograph, and decided to do a little study on the transformation of the body - getting lost in the wealth of scripture that is there.

One particular verse stood out:

“We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure” II Corinthians 4:7 (NLT)

Adam Clarke’s commentary on this verse pointed out that that the literal translation is ‘vessels made of shells’ - brittle and easily broken - and the metaphor for body and soul is a good one. He also pointed out that if the jar is ‘pre-kiln’, it can be refashioned by the Potter. That was enough. I took the photographs, and the words came as I searched the scriptures. I hope you are encouraged by both.

MAB May 2020