

Both Ends of the Book

Fellowship of the Broken Hearted

Why God Is Near to Them

שבר

shâbar to break, break in pieces, break, break in or down, rend violently, wreck, crush, quench

“Yehovah is near to the broken of heart; and He saves the crushed of spirit.” Psa 34:18
LITV

The form of “broken of heart” is a niph'al or passive stem that is a participle, or ongoing action. It is the “being broken of heart ones.”

Have you been there or are you there now? Do you have a heart that as been crushed, shattered? Heart or *leb* in Hebrew is much more than your emotions. It is your thoughts, your feelings and your will all acting together to reveal your “heart” through what you do.

Here in this Psalm, the breaking of hearted ones have YHVH, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob becoming *qârôb*, near to them. And he saves the ones whose spirit is dust (*dakkâ'* in Hebrew; dust if it is a noun, contrite if it is an adjective). Want to get close to God? Be being crushed and be like dust in your spirit. Doesn't sound like fun, but it is true.

The word *shâbar* is frequently used of braking things, including destroying the pillars of false gods, and is most often used with God as the subject. For example, hear what is being said about Israel in this text:

“Now come, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a book, so that it may be for the latter day, until forever; that this is a rebellious people, lying sons; sons who are not willing to hear the Torah of Yehovah; who say to the seers, Do not see; and to visioners, Do not have a vision for right things to us; speak smooth things to us; have a vision of trifles.”
Isaiah 30:8-10 LITV

The result of this is that like a high bulging wall whose breaking (*shêber* the noun form of *shâbar*) comes suddenly “and its breaking (*shâbar*) is like that of a potter's vessel that is smashed so ruthlessly that among its fragments not a shard is found with which to take fire from the hearth, or to dip up water out of the cistern.” Isa 30:14 ESV

That is *shâbar* and when combined with heart, it is a heart that is so broken up there is no ability or even a want to be able to reassemble it. There is not a piece big enough to start the process with and super glue is not going to help.

Either I have done something to myself, someone has done something to me or both are true and now I am in a place where my world, what I have given my heart to, is gone,

smashed to dust and useless to try to assemble. Just like the Danny Gokey song: *You're shattered, Like you've never been before, The life you knew, In a thousand pieces on the floor.* That is a “shabarred” life.

Why would God be close to these broken ones and promise to bind up those wounds as his promise speaks? “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.” Psa 147:3 ESV

Because when you have gotten shattered like that, there is no more room for pretense.

David committed adultery with the wife of one of his soldiers while Uriah was on the battlefield. She got pregnant and to cover it up he had this military man killed. He thought he had gotten away with the whole mess and his prophet, Nathan walks in and tells the story of a man with many sheep. That man then takes another man’s only little ewe lamb, that ate with the man and drank from his cup, and uses it to feed a visitor. David becomes angry and says that man should die, and Nathan says simply “You are the man!”

Psalm 51 comes out of this experience, and David says:

“For you do not desire sacrifice, or I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.” Psa 51:16-17

The purpose of an offering is to draw near to God, to remove the distance that has come in between.

He is near to the brokenhearted because when a heart has come into this state it is because the collapse has happened to everything that had come in between that heart and that heart’s Creator. When our own sin, and sin in general with all of its effects and consequences are realized, we have nothing left within ourselves that we can use to prop ourselves up.

It is like the words of Isaiah: “Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” 6:5 JPS

He was coming apart, which is how it feels when your heart is shattered.

But know this, Yeshua came for those who are in this category, and he speaks of himself in Luke 4 when he says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Because of this He anointed Me to proclaim the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me" to heal the brokenhearted . . ." He binds up all their wounds.

To be healed, you only first must be broken.