

Description of Physical Death (vv. 6-7)

VERSE 6 Remember Him before the silver cord is broken [severed] and the

golden bowl is crushed (עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִרְחַק) [יִרְחַק] חֵבֶל הַכֶּסֶף וְתַרְזֵן גִּלְתַּת הַזָּהָב)

[part adh before + rel.pro. asher + neg lo + Qal impf.3m.s. rachaq be removed, be loosen; “is broken” + noun m.s.abs. chebel cord + d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. keseph silver + waw w/Qal impf.3f.s. ratsats crush + noun f.s.constr. tullah bowl, basin + d.a.w/noun m.s.ab.s zabab gold],

the pitcher by the well is shattered and the wheel at the cistern is crushed [הַבּוֹר-

וְתִשָּׁבַר כֶּד עַל-הַמְּבוּעַ וְנַרְזֵן הַגִּלְגָּל אֶל

[waw w/Niphal impf.3f.s. shabar shatter + noun f.s.abs. kadh jar, pitcher + prep al at + d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. mabbu-a springs; cf. Isa. 35:7; 49:10; “well” + waw w/Niphal perf.3m.s. ratsats crush + d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. gilgal wheel + prep al at, beside + noun m.s.abs. bor cistern];

VERSE 7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return

to God who gave it (וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל-הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה)

וְיָשָׁב [waw w/Qal impf.3m.s. shub return + d.a.w/noun m.s.abs. apha dust + prep al to +

d.a.w/noun both s.abs. eretz earth + prep kaph w/rel.part. sh w/Qal perf.3m.s. hayah be “as it was” + waw w/d.a.w/noun both s.abs. ruach spirit + Qal impf.3f.s. shub return + prep el to +

d.a.w/noun m.p.abs. Elohim + rel.pro. asher who + Qal perf.3m.s.w/3f.s.suff. nathan give]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 6-7

1. The end of verse 5 deals with death and so serves as a transition to verses 6 & 7 which deals with physical death resulting in the breaking of the connection between the soul and the higher brain stem.
2. In verse 6 there is a cascade effect based on the severing of the “silver cord.”
3. The verb “is broken” is the Niphal imperfect of *rathaq* which means ‘to bind,’ but is here used with the negative (*lo*).
4. To unbind is in this case to ‘be broken’ (KJV ‘be loosed’ and in the NIV ‘is severed’)
5. This verb only occurs in two verses (here and in Nah. 3:10).

6. The living soul is interfaced with the brain computer.
7. If this connection is severed, physical death is the result (cf. Jam. 2:26 “For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.”; cf. Joh. 19:30b “And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”).
8. Some take the silver cord to be the spinal cord, but this makes little sense.
9. Physical death does not always involve the severing of the spinal cord.
10. So again, the first metaphor has to do with the severing of the soul/spirit from the physical person.
11. This connection is established when God gives the living soul to the newborn (Adam is the pattern).
12. “And the golden bowl is crushed” (Qal impf. *ratsats* ‘to crush’; ‘to oppress’) refers to the shutting down of the brain (straight line).
13. “The pitcher by the well is shattered” (Niphal impf. *shabar* break, break in pieces) is understood as the heart failing to pump blood (“well”).
14. In that connection “the wheel at the cistern” refers to vascular system of veins and arteries being shut down (Niphal perf.2m.s. *ratsats* crush used also in connection with the golden bowl).
15. Verse 7 is non metaphorical and describes the fate of the body and “the spirit” after death.
16. “The dust” refers to the origin of the physical body in Gen. 2:7 “Then the LORD God formed man of the dust from the ground...”
17. The human body is made up of the minerals found in the earth’s crust.
18. For the curse placed on the man after the fall note Gen. 3:19 “By the sweat of your face, you will eat bread, until you return to the ground. For you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (also, Gen. 18:27 “And Abraham replied, ‘Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am dust and ashes.’”; Job 4:19 “How much more those who dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are crushed by the moth?”; 10:9 “Remember now, that You have made me as clay, and would You turn me into dust again?”; 21:23-26; 34; 34:14-15 “If He should determine to do so, if He should gather to Himself His spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust.”; Pss. 90:3 You turn man back into dust, and say, ‘Return, O children of men.’”; 103:14 “For He Himself knows our frame. He is mindful that we are but dust.”; 104:29 “Your hide Your face, they are dismayed. Your take away their spirit, they expire/die and return to their dust.”; Eccl. 3:20 “All go to the same place. All came from the dust and all return to the dust.”; Isa. 26:19 “Your dead will live. Their corpses will rise. You who dwell in the dust, awake and shout for joy. For your dew is as the dew of dawn. And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.”; Dan. 12:2 “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, those to everlasting life, but others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”).
19. “And the spirit will return to God” refers to the departure of the *neshemah* of Gen. 2:7 (cf. 7:22).
20. The soul is given at birth and that takes place when the newborn takes its very first breath of air (Job 27:3 “For as long as life is in me, and the breath of God is in my nostrils.”; 33:4 “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.”; 24:14; Isa. 2:22 “Stop regarding man, whose breath is in his nostrils. For why should he be esteemed?”).
21. The spirit returning to God refers to the afterlife, where the departed dead go.