

I had a friend who was in the business of working with new materials and substances, looking for something with various physical characteristics that could improve our everyday lives. He would show me his latest discoveries with great pride whenever I came to visit.

One day he brought out a complex item that had been machined to very exact specifications. He gave me a scribe and told me to try to scratch the surface. I hesitated, but at his insistence I gave it a try. I could not make even the slightest mark!

Then he showed me a similar-looking material. He asked me to try again with the scribe. I made a deep gouge, and looked up with surprise. My friend had a huge grin on his face.

He said, “We begin with this substance because it is fairly soft and easy to machine. Then we put it into a furnace with a heated gaseous atmosphere. The gas infuses into the porous starter material and the resulting combination is extremely hard and difficult to cut or polish. The volume barely even changes. And the greatest thing about it is that you can fabricate a complicated item in pieces and, if done properly, the final product is monolithic without seams or any indication of where the pieces were fitted together!”

I was truly amazed, and it got me to thinking about times when I tried to glue something back together that I had broken. Usually the item belonged to someone else and I wanted the cracks to be invisible so my misadventure could also be hidden.

I asked my friend, “If something made out of this material broke, could the same process be used to fix it to its original state? Could it be ‘healed’?” He answered with an emphatic “Yes!”

I looked diligently for a sign of a seam or some type of imperfection, but could not find any. There were very detailed features, and even threaded holes for mounting. I commented on the intricacy of the work, and my friend had more of the story to tell.

“This substance is so hard and tough that it outlasts other materials that we are more familiar with in regard to great strength. Once when we had a stainless-steel bolt that got stuck in one of the threaded holes, we were in a dilemma for a while wondering how we could get it out. We finally decided to put the whole thing back into the furnace. We melted the bolt out, and our project suffered no ill effects at all!”

“We take a material that has good manufacturability and makes up 18.5% of the human body, infuse a vapor of an element that makes up 15% of the earth’s crust, and create one of the hardest compounds that exists (almost as hard as diamond)¹. You have to realize that what occurs is structural growth from within (not just pieces glued together with separable interface between them).

After leaving my friend’s laboratory, I couldn’t get my mind off of what I had seen and the extension of it to our own brokenness and the need to be repaired. We cannot do it ourselves, like trying to glue back together something that we have broken. But God loves our broken and contrite hearts², and saves those who are crushed in spirit³. God restores our soul⁴.

The good news, I saw, was that even though we are broken⁵, God loves us and offers to heal us. To the Creator of all, we are definitely worth fixing and He has the power to do so⁶. He can put us back together without pieces popping off when we are under stress. We become an integrated whole as God can transform us in a seamless manner into a new creation that is much better stronger than before⁷; impervious and indestructible. We are no longer an assembly of

discrete pieces that can come apart again, but have a unity of being and purpose. There are no longer even the marks where we once were broken.

God does not put us back together like the bionic man, with normal and technical pieces and parts being mixed together. He does not give us a patchwork soul, that still retains the macro and microfractures that pose the potential for future growth and breakage. We will be remade to fit into the new heavens and earth that are coming⁸, and the New Kingdom that will fill the new universe after sweeping the broken pieces of the old away⁹.

The idea of melting the bad out, no matter how impervious it seems, has a parallel to burning out the sin in our lives. It corresponds to how God can refine us in a crucible so that we are made pure¹⁰. God reassembles us seamlessly and infuses His Spirit in us so that we are indeed a new creation.

1. Silicon Carbide: begin with the good manufacturability of graphite (carbon – 18.5% of human body); infuse it with silicon vapor at high temperature in a furnace vapor (silicon – 15% of earth’s crust); the result is one of the hardest compounds ever (9 to 9.5 vs 10 for diamond on Moh’s scale) with only 0.5% volume growth.
2. Psalm 51:17; My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.
3. Psalm 34:18; “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”
4. Psalm 23:3a; “He restores my soul.”
5. Psalm 31:12; “I am forgotten as though I were dead; I have become like broken pottery.”
6. Isaiah 58:12; “Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.”
7. Jeremiah 28:13; “Go and tell Hananiah, ‘This is what the Lord says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron.’”
8. New heavens and new earth
9. Daniel 2:35; “Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.”
10. Zechariah 13:9; ‘This third I will put into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’”