

THE SOVEREIGN GOD AND THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL: A STUDY OF EPHESIANS

(LESSON FORTY-TWO)

SYSTEMS OF THE HUMAN BODY

Who made the body?

The first known mention of human beings is found in Gen 1:27.. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (KJV) That is in the image and likeness of God.

Again, in Gen 2:7... Then the Lord God formed [that is, created the body of] man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being [an individual complete in body and spirit] (AMP)

We see declarations of our creation by the psalmist in Ps 119:73 With your very own hands you formed me; now breathe your wisdom over me so I can understand you. (MSG) and again in Psalm 139:13-16 Oh yes, you shaped me first inside, then out; you formed me in my mother's womb. I thank you, High God—you're breathtaking! Body and soul, I am marvelously made! I worship in adoration—what a creation! You know me inside and out, you know every bone in my body; You know exactly how I was made, bit by bit, how I was sculpted from nothing into something. Like an open book, you watched me grow from conception to birth; all the stages of my life were spread out before you. The days of my life all prepared before I'd even lived one day. (MSG) Yes we were made to worship God in, by and with our bodies.

Now in reference to the collective saints of Jesus Christ, the true Church
Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one
hope of your calling.

1 COR 12 1-3 What I want to talk about now is the various ways God's
Spirit gets worked into our lives. This is complex and often
misunderstood, but I want you to be informed and knowledgeable.
Remember how you were when you didn't know God, led from one
phony god to another, never knowing what you were doing, just doing it
because everybody else did it? It's different in this life. God wants us to
use our intelligence, to seek to understand as well as we can. For
instance, by using your heads, you know perfectly well that the Spirit of
God would never prompt anyone to say "Jesus be damned!" Nor would
anyone be inclined to say "Jesus is Master!" without the insight of the
Holy Spirit.

4-11 God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all
originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out
everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various
expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is
behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God
is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are
handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is
wonderful:

wise counsel
clear understanding
simple trust
healing the sick
miraculous acts
proclamation
distinguishing between spirits
tongues
interpretation of tongues.

All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

We don't get to decide what role we play in the body. God assigns it to us.

12-13 You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body.

Let us now look at the human body to further illustrate this. Our bodies are supported by the skeletal system, which consists of 206 bones that are connected by tendons, ligaments (sinews) and cartilage. The skeleton not only helps us move, but it's also involved in the production of blood cells and the storage of calcium. The teeth are also part of the skeletal system.

The Holy Scriptures paint this picture in Ezekiel 37:7-8 I prophesied just as I'd been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone. I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. (MSG)

The body's muscular system consists of about 650 muscles that aid in movement, blood flow and other bodily functions, such as storing energy. There are three types of muscle: skeletal muscle which is connected to bone and helps with voluntary movement, smooth muscle which is found inside organs and helps to move substances through organs, and cardiac muscle which is found in the heart and helps pump blood.

That sounds like a lot of work. The body does get tired overtime. In old age, your body no longer serves you so well. Muscles slacken, grip weakens, joints stiffen. (Eccl 12:3 MSG)

The nervous system consists of the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system. The central nervous system includes the brain and spinal cord. The peripheral nervous system consists of nerves that connect every other part of the body to the central nervous system. The nervous system controls both voluntary action (like conscious movement) and involuntary actions (like breathing), and sends signals to different parts of the body.

The circulatory system consists of the heart, blood, blood vessels, arteries, veins and capillaries. It is responsible for moving blood, nutrients, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and hormones around the body.

The respiratory system allows us to take in vital oxygen and expel carbon dioxide in a process we call breathing. It consists mainly of the nose, pharynx, trachea, the diaphragm and the lungs.

The digestive system consists of a series of connected organs that together, allow the body to break down and absorb food, and remove waste. Food enters the mouth, travels down the esophagus, enters the stomach, then goes through the small intestine, large intestine, and finally is expelled via the rectum through the anus. The liver and pancreas also play a role in the digestive system in that they produce necessary digestive juices.

The urinary system helps eliminate a waste product called urea from the body, which is produced when certain foods are broken down. The whole system includes two kidneys, two ureters, the bladder, two sphincter muscles and the urethra. Urine produced by the kidneys travels down the ureters to the bladder, and exits the body through the urethra.

The endocrine system consists of eight major glands that secrete hormones into the blood, such as the thyroid in the neck, and pancreas and adrenals the abdomen. These hormones, in turn, travel to different tissues and regulate various bodily functions, such as metabolism, growth and sexual function.

The reproductive system allows humans to procreate. The male reproductive system includes the penis and the testes, which produce sperm. The female reproductive system consists of the vagina, the uterus and the ovaries, which produce eggs. During conception, a sperm cell fuses with an egg cell, which creates a fertilized egg that implants and grows in the uterus. The fetus grows and develops until time of birth.

The immune system is the body's defense against bacteria, viruses and other germs that may be harmful. It includes lymph nodes, the spleen, bone marrow, lymphocytes (including B-cells and T-cells), the thymus and leukocytes, which are white blood cells.

The lymphatic system includes lymph nodes, lymph ducts and lymph vessels, and also plays a role in the body's defenses. Its main job is to make and move lymph, a clear fluid that contains white blood cells, which help the body fight infection. The lymphatic system also removes excess lymph fluid from bodily tissues, and returns it to the blood.

The skin, or integumentary system, is the body's largest organ. It protects us from the outside world, and is our first defense against bacteria, viruses and other pathogens. Our skin also helps regulate body temperature and eliminate waste through perspiration. In addition to skin, the integumentary system includes hair and nails which also serve to protect the organ beneath them.

Humans have five vital organs that are essential for survival. These are the brain, heart, kidneys, liver and lungs.

The human brain is the body's control center, receiving and sending signals to other organs through the nervous system and through secreted hormones. It is responsible for our thoughts, feelings, memory storage and general perception of the world.

The human heart is responsible for pumping blood throughout our body.

The job of the kidneys is to remove waste and extra fluid from the blood. The kidneys take urea out of the blood and combine it with water and other substances to make urine.

The liver has many functions, including detoxifying of harmful chemicals, breakdown of drugs, filtering of blood, secretion of bile and production of blood-clotting proteins.

The lungs are responsible for removing oxygen from the air we breathe and transferring it to our blood where it can be sent to our cells. The lungs also remove carbon dioxide, which we exhale.

Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love. (KJV)

He keeps us in step with each other. His very breath and blood flow through us, nourishing us so that we will grow up healthy in God, robust in love. (MSG)

So we see that by looking at our own bodies, although many parts, it is still one body.

No matter how many parts you can name, you're still one body. It's exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one

fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

14-18 I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn't just a single part blown up into something huge. It's all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If Foot said, "I'm not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings; I guess I don't belong to this body," would that make it so? If Ear said, "I'm not beautiful like Eye, limpid and expressive; I don't deserve a place on the head," would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

19-24 But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn't be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, "Get lost; I don't need you"? Or, Head telling Foot, "You're fired; your job has been phased out"? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—the "lower" the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it's a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes no difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn't you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

25-26 The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part,

the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one-part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance. This is well known in times of illness.

If any part of your body is sick the entire body feels it. Even if it is the toenail where it is injured from trauma, the pain is very real. Your emotions change, the way you feel in your body changes. The way we behave if we are cut from a knife slipping or we receive a diagnosis of cancer in one part of the body has one bottom-line...we feel it.

27-31 You are Christ's body—that's who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your "part" mean anything. You're familiar with some of the parts that God has formed in his church, which is his "body":

apostles
prophets
teachers
miracle workers
healers
helpers
organizers
those who pray in tongues.

But it's obvious by now, isn't it, that Christ's church is a complete Body and not a gigantic, unidimensional Part? It's not all Apostle, not all Prophet, not all Miracle Worker, not all Healer, not all Prayer in Tongues, not all Interpreter of Tongues. And yet some of you keep competing for so-called "important" parts.

But now I want to lay out a far better way for you.

Eph 5:21 Out of respect for Christ, be courteously reverent to one another.

Eph 5:26-27 Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don't use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don't stay angry. Don't go to bed angry. Don't give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.

28 Did you use to make ends meet by stealing? Well, no more! Get an honest job so that you can help others who can't work.

29 Watch the way you talk. Let nothing foul or dirty come out of your mouth. Say only what helps, each word a gift.

30 Don't grieve God. Don't break his heart. His Holy Spirit, moving and breathing in you, is the most intimate part of your life, making you fit for himself. Don't take such a gift for granted.

31-32 Make a clean break with all cutting, backbiting, profane talk. Be gentle with one another, sensitive. Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.

Love each other heartily, recognize and appreciate our differences. Understand that our own uniqueness was created by God for His body to carry out His work. Let us ask for wisdom so we can understand Him.