

# I Am Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

*Psalm 139:13-16 "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them."*

The cell is the smallest unit of life. Some organisms, such as the amoeba or bacteria, consist of only one cell. However, many organisms that we think of today are comprised of many cells. This allows different cells to be specialized, meaning that they have different forms and shapes to serve different functions and purposes. When many cells work together, they are organized into tissues. Several tissue types make up organs, which form the organ systems that make up the organism.

The church is known as the body of Christ. Ephesians 5:30 says, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." It is made up of many individual people, the cells. These people are from every tribe, tongue and nation, and have different strengths and weaknesses. Romans 12:4-5 tells us, "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." However, each one is valuable and necessary to the body as a whole. They must work together in harmony to serve the body, and those who rebel will be cast off and destroyed. This is taught in Ephesians 4:16, which says, "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."

The Bible speaks in many places about the human body, or its different parts. Many are found in the Psalms and the book of Job. Scripture mentions bones, skin, heart, hands, arms, hair, sinews (tendons and ligaments), for just a few examples. In verses 12, 18, and 25 of I Corinthians 12, we read that all parts of the body are different, but are part of one body, as the members of the church are of the body of Christ. God has placed each believer in their specific spot as it pleased him, and has given them the abilities to carry out their functions. It is necessary for the members to love and care for one another, for "there should be no schism in the body." The different parts of our own bodies are also interdependent on one another. The relationships between the skeleton, muscles, nervous system, and skin reflect the relationships that the body of

Christ has among itself, with its head, and with the outside world. Let's begin at the framework of the body.

In bones we see the basic hard frame that protects vital organs and gives shape and support to the body. This is much like the doctrines and truths found in Scripture being the skeleton holding the church in its proper form and protecting it, with the creeds and confessions being the cartilage of additional strength and support. Perhaps we would rather not have bones so that we could move more flexibly or to be able to squeeze through tight spots. However, the truth is that we need bones to stand, move, or even just to sit up. Bones protect our heart, lungs, brain, spinal cord, and other vital and delicate organs. Bones aren't restricting our abilities to move, but instead are giving us the liberty to move. The same can be applied to the Ten Commandments. Some people think they are unnecessary rules and boundaries, but they in fact give the church structure and the life of freedom to serve God. Many people outside of our churches might think that our doctrines are dead and old fashioned. Oh, but bones are not dead! Bone is continually growing, repairing and replacing itself. Bone marrow itself is the factory that produces blood cells in our bodies. The truths of the gospel have continued to grow and develop throughout history. The blood cells necessary to keep the rest of the body's cells living could be compared to the faithful saints in the past who brought the great news of the word to those who needed it. Think of Martin Luther (the blood cell) who shared the doctrine of justification by faith alone (which came from the bones of Scripture). The relationship between bones and blood is often overlooked by many, but it is an important one to remember.

Motion comes from the coordination of the nervous system with the muscles of the body. A muscle must be exercised in order to grow strong and remain healthy. The body of Christ must act in love and exercise its faith and works of thankfulness to God, or muscular dystrophy (shrinking and inability to contract) will occur. Just as the nervous system works to balance any spasms or unnecessary contractions by muscles in the body, so the members of the church are controlled by the head. The brain is constantly sending impulses throughout the body as it receives various stimuli from the five senses and regulators in the body. It needs to decide which stimuli to ignore as it responds to others. For example, someone who lives near the train tracks will eventually be able to sleep through the night peacefully. This is because your brain has become accustomed to the sound, and even though nerves impulses are still coming from the ears to the brain, the brain has recognized that that train whistle is not important for the body to be warned against. At this point in time, the body doesn't need to prepare to fight or flee from the outside object making that noise, so the brain seemingly ignores this stimulus in order to take care of more important ones. Christ, as head of the church, regulates in a way which stimuli or issues the body responds to, and which are "ignored." For example, the big issues in the early church

had to do with Jesus Christ and his divine and human natures, leading to our Creeds. In the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance period the issue was more focused around the way of salvation, leading to the Reformation. Today the issues could range from our view of war, politics, homosexuality, and the end times. That being said, the muscles of faith cannot be moved unless they are anchored to the bones of the truth of the gospel, and they must be stimulated by the communicating nervous system of Christ and the ministers whom he has called to preach the gospel. Communication must occur between the cells, as the church has by means of the fellowship and communion of saints. Communication must also occur between the head and the body, as the church has with Christ through singing praises, prayer, and the reading and preaching of the word. Without communication, there is no growth or movement of the body.

The skin that clothes the body is one large sense organ. It is a continuous sheet, yet displays such a range of variety. The skin of the lungs and lips are very thin so that blood can be near the surface, yet the skin on the heel of the foot is very thick due to constant rubbing and abrasion. Different areas of the body's skin have varying amounts of hair (compare your head to your arm to the palm of your hand), sweat glands (under your arms, your forehead, your palms sweat more than your elbows or ankles), patterns (compare the swirls, loops, and whorls of fingerprints to the wrinkled knuckle or the back of the hand), and color pigments (freckles and moles are darker for this reason). Even though skin diversity is so vast on a human being, it serves its purposes. The main one I will focus on is that it always reveals whether or not there are problems underneath. Rashes, bug bites, paleness, and bruises all tell the body and the outside world that something's wrong inside. But what is the skin of the church, the body of Christ? That would have to be the witness of the believers. The outside world first sees and can begin to see any problems in the inside of the church by detecting the signs in the Christian walk that has gone awry. Skin must be strong and united to be a defensive barrier against the attacks of abrasion, viruses, bacteria, and other foreign chemicals and substances. That is why blisters come off in sheets, not cell by cell—they are strongly bonded. Believers must be united by their faith in Christ in order to be effective defenders of the truth against heresy, even if it means becoming martyrs. God will call new saints to take their places, just as skin continues to renew itself in layers. Skin transfers warmth and love into, out of, and throughout the body. The warm love of Christ clothes the church, and that love radiates from the believers.

We needn't go to the four corners of the world to find some untouched wilderness to see the greatness and beauty of God. Yes, if we do go to the heights of heaven, or depths of the sea, or the ends of the earth, God is there, but it should not be necessary to go to such extremes in order to be amazed by his handiwork. We need only to look

at ourselves, the beings created in the very image of God, to stand in awe before our maker. Saint Augustine once wrote, “Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering.” A simple look at the human body is enough to make one say, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made!”