
The Messenger



"... How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" Romans 10:15

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Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

by Wayne Jackson

INTRODUCTION

David, king of Israel, confidently declared: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). Three thousand years of medical advancements have demonstrated the accuracy of this affirmation. A recent book published by the Reader's Digest Association declares: "When you come right down to it, the most incredible creation in the universe is you – with your fantastic sense and strengths, your ingenious defense systems, and mental capabilities so great you can never use them to the fullest. Your body is a structural masterpiece more amazing than science fiction" (Guinness, 1987, p. 5).

In a previous article this writer commenced the presentation of an argument that develops as follows. (1) If it is the case that an object evinces design, then it must have had a designer. (2) But it is the case that the human body evinces design. (3) Thus, it is the case that the human body must have had a designer. The reader should briefly review the preceding article to refresh his mind as to what constitutes "design."

As mentioned earlier, the human body can be studied at four major levels – cell, tissue, organ, and system. All of these are highly integrated arrangements within the physical frame. In this discussion, consideration will be given to the design characteristics of some of the major systems of the human anatomy.

DESIGN IN THE BODY'S SYSTEMS

The Skin System

The skin system consists of three areas: the skin layers, the glands, and the hair and nails. Each of these is characterized by obvious design.

The skin is the largest organ of the body. If the skin of an average 150 pound man were spread out, it would cover 20 square feet of space and weigh about 9 pounds. The skin is a busy area. "A piece of skin the size of a quarter contains 1 yard of blood vessels, 4 yards of nerves, 25 nerve ends, 100 sweat glands, and more than 3 million cells" (Youmans, 1979, 17:404d). These numbers will vary at different body locations.

The skin, containing two major layers, is, on average, only about 1/8 of an inch thick. The epidermis is the top segment. It consists of rows of cells, about 12 to 15 deep. The upper layers are dead and are constantly being replaced by newly formed cells. What man-made house replaces its own covering? The epidermis contains a pigment called melanin, which gives the skin its color. The layer of skin underneath is the dermis. It is joined to the epidermis by a corrugated area which contains nerves and blood vessels. When a cut finger draws blood, the dermis has been reached. The dermis contains two kinds of glands – sweat and oil.

The ends of the fingers and toes are protected by a horn-like substance called “nail.” Actually, most of the nail that you see is dead; only the lower, crescent-shaped, white portion is living. The fingernails grow about three times as fast as the toenails. Certainly there is design in this due to the respective functions of the hands and feet. The skin of the underside of the fingers, the palms, and the soles of the feet have a special friction surface. This area has no hair and, like the knurling on a tool handle or the tread of a tire, has been designed for gripping (Miller & Goode, 1960, p. 345).

Hair has several functions. It is a part of the skin’s sentry system. Eyelashes warn the eyes to close when dust strikes them. The hairs also serve as levers, connected to muscles, to help squeeze the oil glands. Hair acts as a filter in the nose and ears. Hair “grows” to a certain length, falls out, and then, in most instances, is replaced by new hair. Hair is “programmed” to grow a certain length. Eyelashes obviously do not grow as long as scalp hair. Who planned it this way? Clearly there is design in this circumstance. Compared to most mammals, man is relatively hairless. Why is this? A strong case can be made for the fact that the best explanation is to be found “in the design of the human body with personhood in view” (Cosgrove, 1987, p. 54). Skin touch is very closely associated with human emotions.

Human skin is one of the body’s most vital organs. Its value may be summarized as follows: (1) The skin is a protective fortification which normally keeps harmful bacteria from entering the human body. (2) It is a water-proof wall which holds in the fluids of the body. Our bodies are about 75% fluid. (3) It protects the interior parts of the body from cuts, bruises, etc. (4) With its pigment, it shields the body from harmful rays of the sun. Beck calls melanin “an epidermal light filter” (1971, p. 745). Do we not assume that the various light filters invented by man required intelligence? (5) The skin’s many nerve endings make it sensitive to touch, cold, heat, pain, and pressure. It is thus a major sense organ. (6) The sweat glands (2 to 5 million in the whole body) help eliminate waste products and also function in cooling the skin. (7) The oil glands lubricate the skin and keep it soft, at the same time waterproofing it. Though soft, the skin is extremely durable. When a 2,000 year old Egyptian mummy was fingerprinted, the ridges were found to be perfectly preserved (Guinness, 1987, p. 132). (8) About 1/3 of the body’s blood circulates through the skin. The blood vessels, by contracting and expanding, work to regulate body temperature. If body temperature increases by 7 or 8 degrees, a person will die. The skin is thus a radiator system (Brand & Yancey, 1980, p. 154). Does anyone believe that the automobile radiator happened by accident? (9) The skin absorbs ultraviolet rays from the sun and uses them to convert chemicals into vitamin D, which the body needs for proper utilization of calcium. The skin is a chemical-processing plant. Truly, the skin system evinces remarkable design, which argues for a Designer.

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