

The Human Body

1. From the perspective of science and evolutionary naturalism, what comprises a human being?

The human body is simply comprised of atoms, and the human conscious (one's soul or spirit) is no more than the result of chemical reactions in the brain. From this perspective there is no distinction between body and soul; their reality is simply one single substance. The philosophical term for this view is **monism**. There are 3 types of monism:

Materialistic monism reduces the human being, including any immaterial aspects of a human being such as human consciousness, to physical matter. The human soul or spirit is simply the nervous system and a physical part of the human body; the brain processes various stimuli and secretes chemical thoughts.

Idealistic monism is a historical reaction to materialistic monism and is counter to common sense and reality. It views the human being and consciousness as a single mental construct. Some idealistic monists believe that all physical reality is non-existent and that our perceptions are an error of the mind. Others see the human body as a result of the mind thinking and synthesizing the creation of its reality.

Psychophysical parallelism or *dual aspect monism* holds the view that body and soul are simply aspects of one substance; thus, this substance is partly material and partly immaterial. Because these two aspects are so dissimilar, they cannot be the cause of the other. The body and soul are independent of each other yet mutually correspond with each other; the thoughts of the soul correspond with the processes of the brain.

2. Was the human body created as something good or evil? Consult Genesis 1:31; 2:7; and Deuteronomy 28:4.

God saw that the creation of man, including his human body, as being "very good" (Gen 1:31). In fact, the body was necessary for a fully human life experience (Gen 2:7), and occasionally its reference was to that part of a person that was involved with reproduction (Deut 28:4). It was after the sin of Adam and Eve that the human body became corrupt and mortal (Gen 3:19).

3. What is the relationship between the human body and sin? Study 1 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 1:24-27; 7:24; 8:13; and 12:1.

The apostle Paul teaches:

The body is often the instrument of sin (1 Cor 6:18).

Sin dishonors the body (Rom 1:24-27). In this context, Paul is making a reference to sexual sins.

The body must die as the penalty for sin (Rom 7:24).

Christians can "put to death the deeds of the body" (Rom 8:13) and present their bodies as holy sacrifices that please God (Rom 12:1).

As a side note, Gnosticism existed during the early centuries of Christianity. Gnostics believed that the body and soul of mankind was evil and that the spirit was asleep and ignorant and needed to be awoken and liberated by knowledge. One sect of Gnostics believed that once their spirit was liberated with this knowledge, their "evil" bodies could indulge in any sinful sexual desire without any consequence to their "salvation".

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4. Study Leviticus 19:28; Genesis 4:13-15; Ezekiel 9:1-6; Revelation 7:1-4; 13:16-18; 14:9-12. What does the Bible say about marks on the body?

Leviticus 19:28 is often used as the proof text prohibiting the cultural practice of tattoos. When Leviticus was written, it was in context to Israel's pagan neighbors who saw religious significance to cutting one's flesh for the dead and tattooing. Moses prohibited this practice, because it signified disrespect for the object that was created in the image of God. Then as now, the human body was intended to glorify God (1 Cor 6:19-20; 10:31) and not call attention to itself (1 Tim 2:9). One may recall that Satan was cast down from heaven, because his sin was pride in his beauty; he was blind to the fact that his being and beauty was a consequence of God's creation (see the article: Who is Satan? at www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/6Angels/FallenAngelSatan.aspx).

Some Christians discount this Old Testament prohibition, because Jesus came to fulfill the Law and freed mankind from being under the Law (Rom 10:4; Gal 3:22-25). While there aren't any prohibitions in the New Testament against tattoos, both the Old and New Testament do talk about the subject of marks on the body.

Genesis 4:13-15: God gives Cain a mark that identifies him and prevents anyone from killing him.

Ezekiel 9:1-6: An angel marked faithful men of Jerusalem on their forehead, which spared them from God's judgment of death against idolatry.

Revelation 7:1-4: God will seal 144,000 of His servants on their foreheads in preparation before God's judgments are released.

Revelation 13:16-18: The Beast (Antichrist) will mark his followers on the forehead or right hand with a seal, which can be seen as a counterfeit to God's seal in Revelation 7:1-4.

Marks on the body do serve a Godly purpose, although certainly not in the manner that today's tattoos are used. And while there is no explicit evidence in the New Testament against tattoos, there is clearly more implicit evidence against it than for it.

5. What happens to the human body when one dies? See Psalms 103:14-16.

With one's death, the human body decays and goes to dust (Ps 103:14-16). However, the function of one's physical body does not end there.

A. What happens in the future to a Christian's body after death? See Romans 8:11-30 and 1 Corinthians 15:12-58.

Glorification is the final stage of the salvation process where God restores the deceased human body to its soul / spirit. In this process, Jesus not only redeems man's soul, He redeems the whole person including his body.

The resurrection of human bodies to their corresponding souls are mentioned twice. The first resurrection occurs at the start of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev 20:4-6) and the second after (Acts 17:30-31; Rev 20:12-13) when judgment before the Great White Throne occurs.

When the resurrection of bodies from the dead occurs, it will signify the destruction of the last enemy, death, which was the result of the Fall of Adam and Eve; thus, Christ's redemption of mankind will be complete and victorious (1 Cor 15:12-58).

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While most of what is known about the resurrection of human beings is in the New Testament, there are clear indications that Old Testament authors expected bodily resurrection to occur in the future as well (Job 19:25-26; Isa 26:19; Dan 12:2).

B. What will a resurrected body be like? Read 1 Corinthians 15:42-53 and Matthew 27:52-53.

The resurrected body will be a new body that is “imperishable” which implies that it will not have sickness, disease or grow old (1 Cor 15:42-49). The human body will once again be the pinnacle of God’s creation as He originally intended it to be.

The resurrected will be “raised in glory” (1 Cor 15:42-44). There is the suggestion that this may be in a form of radiance (Dan 12:3; Matt 13:43). While it is difficult to determine if the biblical statements are metaphorical, there are examples of radiance as seen on Moses at Mt. Sinai (Ex 34:35) or Jesus at the transfiguration (Matt 17:2).

The resurrected body retained features that people could recognize and know (Matt 27:52-53):

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be recognized (Matt 8:11).

Elijah and Moses were recognized (Luke 9:30-33).

The resurrected body can be touched and felt (Luke 24:39).

For those Christians who may be alive when Christ returns, their physical bodies are *changed* not replaced (1 Cor 15:51-53).

Christians will have new bodies suitable for living in the “new heavens and new earth” (2 Pet 3:13).

C. What happens to a non-Christian after death? See John 5:29 and Acts 24:15.

Both the apostle John and Paul indicate that non-Christians will also be raised from the dead; however, they will face final judgment at the time of their resurrection (John 5:29; Acts 24:15).

References:

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2. Grudem W, *Systematic Theology*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan (1994).
3. Swindoll CR and Zuck RB, *Understanding Christian Theology*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson (2003).

