

2. Image: The Goodness of Souls and Bodies

Introduction

1. Human Creatures are Bodies

- Formed (*yāsar*) (Gen 2:7)
- Built (*bānah*) (Gen 2:22)
- I don't merely *have* a body; I *am* a body
 - Crashing into your car vs running over your foot...
 - Established in creation (Gen 2:5-7, 22)
 - Eternally confirmed in the resurrection (1 Cor 15)
- How does Adam know he is different from the animals? (Gen. 2:18-20)
- How does the man know he is similar to and different from the woman? (Gen 2:23)
 - Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh (Gen 29:14; Judg 9:2; 2 Sam 5:1; 19:12-13; 1 Chron 11:1)
 - Adam (*ādām*) from the ground (*ādāmāh*) (2:7)
 - Earthling from the earth; Terry Firm from the *terra firma*
 - Woman (*'iššāh*) from man (*'iš*) (2:23)
 - Flamegirl from fireboy

Implication:

- As a species we are male and female; and each of us is male or female
- My body is basic to understanding who I am: I am either male or female, defined by my body
- But, we are not *just* bodies...

2. Human Creatures are Ensouled (Animated/Living) Bodies

a. Basic views on soul-body relationship

- **Materialism:** we are just bodies

 - **Dualism:** we are composed of two substances: soul + body
 - Plato
 - Modern radical opposition between soul and body
 - Rene Descartes (1596-1650)
 - Mind = a non-extended thinking thing (*res cogitans*)—the real me
 - A world of pure interiority
 - Material world of (mechanical) extended things (*res extensae*)
 - A world of pure exteriority
 - What is a human person? A ghost in a machine¹
 - Primacy of free human choice
 - NB contemporary shift from *thinking* (Descartes) to *feeling/desiring* and *willing*

 - **Hylomorphism:** the soul is the form of the body

 - Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, many Protestant Reformers
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- ‘the soul is the drive and form of the body’, it is ‘the mover [motor]’ of the body.²
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- ‘Form’ - what makes this set of atoms and molecules a body, a human body, *your* body

 - Drive/motor - the soul is the animating principle of the body
 - Cf. Latin for soul: *anima* (wind, breath)

 - What happens when your body and soul are separated? (James 2:26)

¹ The phrase is Gilbert Ryle’s description of Descartes’ mind-body dualism.

² Peter Martyr Vermigli, ‘The Image of God’, from his *Commentary on Genesis*, in *Philosophical Works*, trans. and ed. Joseph C. McLelland (Trueman State University Press, 1996), 38, 40.

b. The Bible's Teaching

- Gk: *psyche* – basic meaning is ‘breath’ or ‘life’
- Heb: *nepeš* – 740 times in OT.
- Basic meaning of *nepeš* is ‘breath’ (Ex 23:12; 31:17; 2 Sam 16:14)
- Can also mean:
 - Throat/gullet (Prov 10:3; 13:25; 25:25; Isa 5:14; Hab 2:5)
 - Soul (Prov 11:25; 13:4; 29:17; Ps 116:7; 138:3)
 - Self/myself (E.g., Gen 12:13; 19:19-20; 1 Kings 20:32; Ps 103:1, 2, 22)
 - Life (1 Sam 26:21, 24; 1 Kings 1:13, 14)
 - Living creature/Person (Gen 17:14; Ex 12:15, 16, 19; 31:14; Lev 2:1; 4:2; 5:1, 2, 4, 15....etc!)
- What’s going on in Genesis 2?

‘The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature (*nepeš ḥayyāh*)’
(Gen 2:7)

- 2 stages:
 - Forming a body
 - Breathing life into the body
- *nepeš ḥayyāh* – a living creature in contrast to a dead one (Num 5:2; 6:6, 11)
- ‘according to Gen 2:7, a person does not *have* a vital self, but *is* a vital self’.³

Implication:

- I am not a soul that has a body

³ H. Seebass ‘נֶפֶשׁ, *nepeš*, in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol IX, 511-12.

- I am an ensouled (animated/living) body, because I am a body into which God has breathed the breath of life.
- Your body *is* you!
 - I am not merely a soul, or an “I” temporarily linked with a body
 - Nor am I an “I”, a “self” arbitrarily trapped in a body
 - I am not merely a biological organism or machine
 - The human body is fully personal
 - Your face and eyes
- An illustration: a painting of a person...⁴
 - blobs of paint on a canvas...
 - but also a portrait of a face...
 - but the face does not exist separately from the blobs of paint
- Animals, birds and fish are also living creatures (*nepeš ḥayyāh*) (Gen 1:24, 28; 9:10, 16)
 - ...because they have the breath of life (Gen 7:22)
- So, what makes humans different?

3. Human Creatures are Rational, Relational Ensouled Bodies

- We are Persons

Gen 1:20-22	Gen 1:26-28
And God said, ‘Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.’ So God created...	And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image , after our likeness ...So God created man in his image ...male and female he created them.
And God blessed them saying ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas and let birds multiply on the earth’	And God blessed them. And God said to them , ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing [<i>nepeš ḥayyāh</i>] that moves on the earth’.

⁴ Roger Scruton, *On Human Nature* (Princeton University Press, 2017), 30-31.

- Four differences between the creation of birds/fish and the creation of humans
 1. ‘**Let us make**’ – a hint that the One God exists as a Trinity of Persons
 2. God makes man *in his image*, male and female
 3. God **speaks to humans** (not just *about us*)
 - As the persons of the Trinity communicate with each other, so in a way appropriate to us as creatures, they communicate with us
 - NB: Unlike the animals, Adam also speaks (Gen 2:20, 23)
 4. God gives humans **dominion**

Implications

- We are the creature that is made to communicate with God: we are rational and relational
 - Listening to God’s Voice in Scripture, and speaking to him in worship and prayer are central to being human, in his image
- We are made to reflect God’s character and perfection in creation
 - So holiness matters! (Eph 4:24)
- We are set over the animals
 - Human lives therefore have far greater value than the lives of other creatures
- Humans have authority over the rest of creation: to rule and care for it, in a way that reflects God’s wise and loving rule