



Physical Connections to Salvation

Colossians 1:21-2:5

The Spirit is Willing but the Flesh is Weak



Blueprint Statement

- Although the spirit is superior to the body, the body nevertheless has important connections with salvation, because the spiritual is usually accessed through our physical bodies

Definitions: “Salvation”

“God’s redemptive activity in forgiving and transforming sinful humans”

(p. 13, Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*)

Definitions: “Sarx”

- Human proclivity/tendency to sin: our “default setting”
- Jonathan Edwards: human beings cannot not sin
- “In Paul’s writings, the flesh stands for the natural desires of a person operating apart from God. . . The pull of the world and temporal, physical needs and pleasures”

<https://www.gotquestions.org/flesh-vs-spirit.html>

Definitions: Paul on “Sarx”

. ¹⁵ For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. . . . ¹⁸ For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. ¹⁹ For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.

Definitions: “Flesh”

(American Heritage College Dictionary)

- “The surface or skin of the human body”
- “The soft tissue of the body of a vertebrate,
consisting mainly of skeletal muscle and fat”
- “The body as opposed to the mind or soul”
- “Humankind in general; humanity”

Clara's Information on "Skin"

- "The *intergumentary system* is *the skin system*.
Something I find interesting is that skin findings are often seen with brain pathologies because they arise from the same germ layer!"
- (I think she means that skin diseases often accompany brain diseases because they are both connected to the same "germ layer" in the body.)

Clara's Information on "Skin"

- My take-away: God has made us in His image
(*imago dei* in Genesis 1)
- Medical science is the worthwhile product of human efforts at understanding how God has constructed the universe and/or how sin has corrupted God's original design. (Science is fascinating!)
- Compare to "theology"

False Dichotomy: The Spirit vs. the “Flesh”

- Avoid the logical fallacy of the false dichotomy/false binary (one or the other thinking): the false idea that we can *either* live by the spirit *or* we can live by the body. This falsely assumes that the human body is inherently “bad” when it is simply neutral: neither good or bad in and of itself.

The Real Conflict: The Spirit vs. “Sarx”

- We do not battle against human “flesh” but against “sarx”—people’s natural tendency to rebel against God. Human flesh is not “good” or “bad”; however, “sarx” is a spiritual flaw produced from Pride—focusing one’s attention on oneself rather than upon God. Unfortunately, “sarx” is often translated as “flesh.”

The “Body”: Three Sections

- **I. Christ’s Physical Connections to Salvation**
- **II. Our Physical Connections to Salvation**
- **III. The Nations’ Physical Connections to Salvation**

I. Christ's Physical Connections to Salvation

A. The Physical Body of Christ as Old Testament "Sacrifice"

B. Christ as God's "Mystery"

C. Christ's Resurrection in a Physical Body

A. The Physical Body of Christ as Old Testament “Sacrifice”

- **Christ physically died**
Colossians 1:22 (see handout)
- **Christ’s blood sacrifice “washes away the sins of humanity”**
I John 1:7 (see slide)

I John 1:7

- .⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

A. The Physical Body of Christ as Old Testament “Sacrifice”

- **Christ physically died**
Colossians 1:22 (see handout)
- **Christ’s blood sacrifice “washes away the sins of humanity”**
I John 1:7 (see slide)
- **Refutes “Colossian Heresy”: Jesus fully human AND fully divine**
Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.)
Contrary to Greek philosophy that humans are “icky”

B. Christ as God's "Mystery"

- The "mystery" was hidden for generations but is now revealed
Colossians 1:26 (see handout)
- The mystery of a "Messiah" who will restore "shalom"—Who?
- God's "mystery" is Christ
Colossians 2:2 (see handout)
- No "special knowledge" needed beyond Christ
(vs. Colossian Heresy)

C. Christ's Resurrection in a Physical Body



Talking to Mary Magdalene outside the tomb (John 20:17)



Walking on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–32)

(Caravaggio: *The Supper at Emmaus*, ca. 1600)



Challenging doubting Thomas (John 20:24-29)



Eating fish with his disciples (John 21:1-14)



II. Our Physical Connections to Salvation

- A. Our experience of Christ in us
- B. The “mystery” of Christ in us
(Colossians 1:27b)
- C. Actions because of Christ in us
(Colossians 1:21-23a)

III. The Nations'

Physical Connections to Salvation

A. The gospel is for all the nations

Colossians 1:23b

B. Energy and perseverance is needed

Colossians 1:24-25, 29

C. "Ministry of Presence"

Colossians 2:4-5

Concluding Thoughts

Weekly Announcements

- Annual Meeting: **Sunday 13 February**
- Will you fill in occasionally for Dan by running the Power Point presentations? (see Dan)
- Is the Spirit leading you to be a “Trustee”? (“Helping Hands” ministry plus some financial oversight)

Benediction

“[May you] grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen”

2 Peter 3:18

Have a great week as you walk with the Lord!

