

HIS

Nature

I praise you because I am fearfully and
wonderfully made; your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
PSALM 139:14

PERSONAL CUPBEARER

We are under assault every moment of every day. Poisons abound in our bodies and in our homes—and if not for our livers, we would all be “goners.” An incredible organ, the liver reveals something very special about our wonderful Creator.

The liver is to the human body what the cupbearer of centuries past was to his king (see Genesis 40 and Nehemiah 1:11). The royal cupbearer tasted the palace wine before the king drank it. This ensured that the king would not be killed by a poison slipped into his drink by some adversary. We, too, are exposed to many chemicals, which, if left unattended, would most certainly kill us. In his great mercy, the Lord Jesus Christ has provided us our own personal “cupbearers” to protect us from harm.

Like a miniature factory, the liver performs more than 500 jobs. It makes proteins critical for blood clotting and

produces bile that aids in the digestion of fatty foods. It is a warehouse for carbohydrates, which are essential to maintaining normal blood sugar levels. Vitamins A, B12, D, E, and K, as well as the minerals iron and copper, are also stored in the liver. Most importantly, it functions as a purification plant, removing noxious and potentially deadly toxins from our bodies. The process by which it does this is complicated, involving such things as oxidation, hydroxylation, and conjugation. Fortunately, we don't have to remember all this (or even know how to pronounce these words) in order for

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our livers to work properly—our Lord Jesus created it all to work automatically.

We are exposed to poisons every day from within and from without. Some of these toxins appear in us as a part of normal metabolism. Bacteria living in our intestines, for example, constantly produce deadly ammonia, which makes its way into our bloodstream. Don't fret, though, because the liver quickly converts ammonia into urea, which is then eliminated from the body.

Caustic chemicals can also be found in our homes. Paint removers, oven cleaners, backyard weed killers, car exhaust—numerous everyday materials are toxic to the human body. One of the liver's main jobs involves removing these chemicals from the bloodstream when they are accidentally absorbed through the skin or lungs.

Throughout our lives, we will be exposed to thousands of hazardous substances, from microorganisms to chemical pollutants. Without our livers, these toxins could accumulate in our bodies and cause considerable damage. Commissioned by God, this special organ filters out a host of these unwanted chemicals and poisons, shielding us from harm just like the royal cupbearer shielded the king.

A word of caution is necessary here. We should not test the Creator's design. Many commonplace and often-used products and materials can harm the liver. The painkiller acetaminophen (Tylenol), for instance,

causes liver damage if overused. So, in one breath we need to thank the Lord for the marvelous gift he has given us, and repeat a warning to ourselves and others: Be careful what you expose your body to.

We may knowingly or unknowingly subject ourselves to harmful chemicals, which the liver then neutralizes. Because constant blood flow is necessary for our bodies to remain free of contamination, the liver pulses with blood day and night. It demonstrates in a physical way that Christ Jesus—our Creator—is a merciful God.

For those of us who love the Lord, Christ's infinite mercy purifies our lives in a far greater way than this. His blood flowed on a cross so that our sins might be forgiven. The liver is an apt symbol of this grace.

I will . . . remove all your impurities
(Isaiah 1:25).

We are truly “fearfully and wonderfully made.” And if we believe in Christ Jesus, we are also fearfully and wonderfully saved. Our livers protect us here and now, but the Cross cleanses us eternally in a way that our bodies simply cannot. Praise be to Jesus, our Creator and our Savior.

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*The blood of Jesus, his Son,
purifies us from all sin.*

I JOHN 1:7