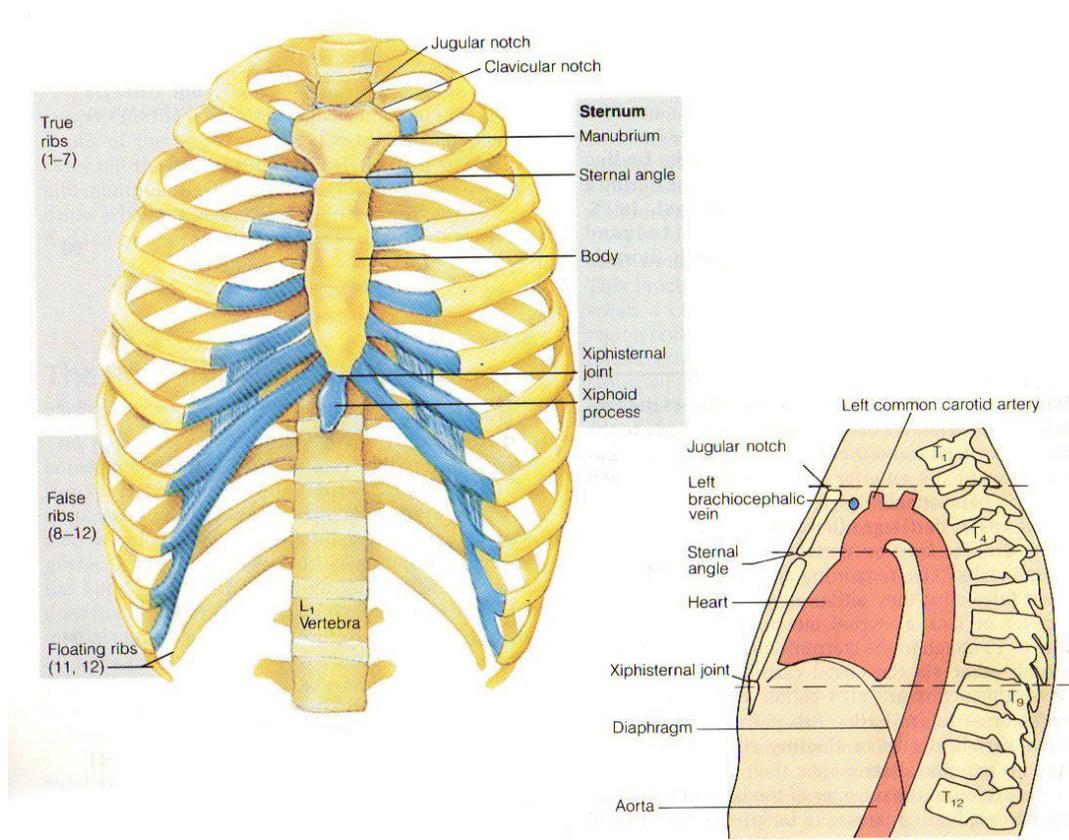


The Sternum

Fanny Beerepoot

The sternum is commonly called the breastbone and is found in the middle of the chest area. To it are attached the clavicle (collarbone), at the clavicular notch, and directly or indirectly the first 10 ribs. This is illustrated in the below diagram taken from Elaine N. Marieb's Human Anatomy and Physiology, Second Edition, page 201.



In Ephesians we are instructed to take the breastplate of righteousness, hence the sternum represents the principle of righteousness.

Ephesians 6:14; *'Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.'*

And further in Isaiah,

Isaiah 59:17; *'For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing,*

and was clad with zeal as a cloke.'

Webster defines righteousness as follows;

Purity of heart and rectitude of life; conformity of heart and life to the divine law. Righteousness, as used in Scripture and theology, in which it is chiefly used, is nearly equivalent to holiness, comprehending holy principles and affections of heart and conformity of life to the divine law. It includes all we call justice, honesty and virtue, with holy affections; in short, it is true religion.

Applied to God, the perfection or holiness of His nature; exact rectitude; faithfulness.

The active and passive obedience of Christ, by which the Law of God is fulfilled Daniel IX.

In this study we will come to see that this connection between righteousness, the law, purity of heart and Yahshua is clearly visible in the anatomy of our body.

The Anatomy of the Sternum

The sternum is composed of three parts and is likened to an ancient sword. The manubrium is the uppermost piece and represents the handle. The middle and largest piece of the sternum is termed the body and represents the chief part of the blade. The third and lowest part of the sternum is called the xiphoid process and forms the point of the sword.

That this bone is likened to a sword is interesting as we can see herein represented the Cherubims who, with a flaming sword, guard the tree of life. The Scriptures say that the fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and when we eat thereof we will live forever.

Genesis 3:24; 'So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.'

Proverbs 11:30; 'The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.'

Genesis 3:22; 'And YaHWaH Elohim said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever.'

The Thoracic Cage

The sternum, ribs and thoracic vertebrae of the vertebral column, make up the thoracic cage which protects the vital organs found in our chest cavity, particularly the heart and lungs.

It is interesting to note that the sternum has a unique association with the heart. In cases of resuscitation the sternum is compressed in order to activate the heart to start beating again. The function of the heart is to pump blood throughout the body and as the Scriptures tell us it is in the blood that life is found.

Leviticus 17:11; *'For the life of the flesh is in the blood....'*

In this analogy we could say that the heart represents the tree of life, guarded by the sword of the cherubim, the sternum. In addition to the heart pumping 'life' around the body, the heart is also the location of the 'inner man'. Thus there are many Scriptural links between righteousness and the heart.

Psalm 40:10; *'I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.'*

Psalm 15:2; *'He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.'*

Resuscitation is done in order to bring back life to a person in the physical realm. In the same way, when we go through the flaming sword of the cherubim, our life with YaHWaH in the Spirit, as we were in the beginning, is also restored. Isn't this a wonderful parallel!

As we have seen, there are three parts to the sternum. Three is an interesting number as it is the number of Divine Perfection. When we are made completely righteous, we have become divinely perfect.

So we see from our anatomy, and the Scriptures, that this becoming divinely perfect, or righteous, has to do with the flaming sword and also the condition of our heart. What does this mean?

The Scriptures tell us that the sword represents the Word of YaHWaH which is able to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12; *'For the word of Elohim is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.'*

But the sword the cherubim's held was a flaming sword. In the Scriptures fire is representative of a purifying agent, a refiner, and it also stands symbolic of the Divine Law.

Deuteronomy 33:2; *'And he said, YaHWaH came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a fiery law for them.'*

As we will see in a further study on the rib cage, the first 7 pairs of ribs are attached directly to the sternum, whilst pairs 8 to 10 are indirectly attached to the sternum. These 10 pairs of ribs represent the 10 commandments. Thus, in our analogy we can see that the turning every way of the flaming sword of the cherubim to guard the tree of life is actually represented in the rib cage which guards the internal organs of the chest. It is therefore through the fire of the Law, the very Word of YaHWaH that we will be purified and made righteous. It is when this process of purification has run its complete course that our true heart will be revealed, a heart of flesh, and the heart of stone will be taken away.

Isaiah 48:10; *'Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.'*

Ezekiel 11:19; *'And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.'*

It is important to note that this process of purification does NOT result in us becoming totally different people. When a metal is purified, it is done by taking out the impurities so that what remains is the pure metal. Thus the precious metal is present all the time but it is covered in dross which needs to be removed. So it is with us. We have within us the righteousness of YaHWaH, but it is covered with dross in the form of our carnality. Once this is removed through the fire of His Word, we may again radiate forth His Divine glory that was already within us from the very beginning!

The righteousness that will be revealed is NOT our own righteousness but rather the righteousness of YaHWaH.

Romans 3:10; *'As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.'*

However, as the Scriptures state, righteousness is not obtained solely by being purified by the law;

Galatians 2:21; *'I do not frustrate the grace of Elohim: for if righteousness come by the law, then Messiah is dead in vain.'*

Our becoming righteous is associated with the life, death and resurrection of Yahshua. He is the link to our being able to be made righteous. In our physical anatomy we also see this link of Yahshua with righteousness. The sternum, representing righteousness, is indirectly linked to the vertebrae of the spinal column (which represent the character traits of Yahshua) through the ribs.

Romans 3:22; *'Even the righteousness of Elohim which is by faith of Yahshua Messiah unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.'*

2 Corinthians 5:21; *'For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of Elohim.'*

Thus we have come full circle. The righteousness of YaHWaH will be revealed in us when, through Yahshua, the carnality is cut away from our hearts through the sword of the Word of YaHWaH, His commandments.

Length of the Sternum

It is interesting to note that the average length of the sternum in adults is seven inches, being rather longer in males than females. This is interesting as the number seven stands for Spiritual Perfection, which in essence is Righteousness!

The Sternum and our Blood

Righteousness means 'Purity of heart and rectitude of life'. Righteousness is therefore an illustration of our purity.

In our physical anatomy, the sternum gives an insight to the condition of our blood, in which is 'life'. So in essence, the sternum indicates our physical 'purity'.

The sternum is full of red bone marrow. Red marrow is essential in the manufacture and maturation of red blood cells, most white blood cells and platelets. It is therefore here that the basic particles that collectively form blood are produced.

As we know, 'life' is in the blood. If there are problems with the blood forming tissue, 'life' cannot be freely transported around the body, with the result being that we are becoming more and more 'impure' What is most interesting is that the area of red bone marrow which is routinely checked when looking for these blood problems is particularly the red marrow within the sternum.

Therefore, just as the sternum shows our physical 'purity' so too is our Spiritual purity measured by the unveiled righteousness of YaHWaH within us.

Attachment of Clavicle and Ribs to Sternum

As you look at the diagram on page one of this study you will note the way the clavicle (collarbone) and ribs are attached to the sternum.

The 10 pairs of ribs, which are linked to the sternum, represent the 10 commandments which, as we learn in the Scriptures, picture righteousness.

Psalm 119:172; *'My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.'*

Revelation 22:14; *'Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.'*

2 Timothy 3:16; *'All scripture is given by inspiration of, Elohim and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.'*

The first rib and clavicle find their attachment site on the manubrium, or 'handle' of the sternum.

As we will learn in a further study of the skeletal system, the clavicle represents the principle of 'responsibility'. The first rib represents the first of the ten commandments, namely, 'I am YaHWaH your Elohim, thou shalt have no other gods before me'.

The manubrium is the handle of the sword. It is by the handle that the sword is held and thus becomes a useful instrument. We learn from these articulations that it is Elohim that is in control of our being, He is taking the responsibility (clavicle) of leading us into righteousness (sternum) and it is through seeing and experiencing His sovereignty (first rib pair) that we are led back into the garden.

Psalm 143:10; *'Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my Elohim: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.'*

This principle is illustrated in the lives of Adam and Eve who are made an example for us. When they experienced the fall they rejected the very first commandment. They thought they could be as gods and thus undermined Fathers Sovereignty. As a result of this, they were put out of the garden and the flaming sword barred the way to the tree of life. To re-enter the garden they, as we, must come to the realisation of the very first commandment, namely the sovereignty of Father, and must walk through the sword which is being turned every way.

Ribs two to ten are directly or indirectly attached to the body of the sternum by their individual costal cartilages. The second rib is attached to the part of the sternum where the manubrium and body join. Ribs three to seven are attached directly to the body of the sternum whilst ribs eight to ten are attached indirectly to the sternum by joining to each other via the costal cartilages immediately above.

The body of the sternum forms the chief part of the blade of the sword. Each of these commandments have to be cut into our hearts as we walk through the sword back to the tree of life. This is the circumcision of the heart, the result being that the Laws are written on our hearts as we see the sovereignty of Father.

Isaiah 51:7; *'Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.'*

Hebrews 10:16; *'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith YaHWaH, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.'*

So we have seen that the sternum articulates with seven costal cartilages and one clavicle on each side. This shows a pattern of $7+1=8$ which is a number specifically associated with resurrection and regeneration and the beginning of a new era or order. This is exactly what happens when we walk through the flaming sword to the tree of life. We will be regenerated and become a 'new' man, as we were in the beginning with Father. We will each return to our inheritance in Him.

In linking this circumcision of the heart to the circumcision of the male children of Israel, we can see that eight is a predominant number;

- The circumcision of the male children was done on the eighth day.
- The sternum - picturing the sword that will circumcise our heart - has eight articulations on each side, thus a total of 16 (2×8) articulations.
- The Scriptures relate that the fullness of our becoming righteous will occur on the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

John 7:37-38; 'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Yahshua stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'

This verse in John is showing what the fulfilment of the Feast of Tabernacles really means. The eighth day is also known as the first or the beginning of a new time period. It is on this day that Yahshua said 'if any man thirst let him come to me and drink', this confirms that we cannot become righteous without Yahshua. It is when we believe on Him, that out of our belly, our inmost being, or our heart, will flow rivers of living water - water bringing the restoration of life eternal.

This, in essence, is what the path to righteousness is all about. It is the process of being led back to our dwelling with Father in life and true holiness.

Muscle Attachments to the Sternum

There are nine pairs of muscle and one single muscle attached to the sternum.

Nine is the number of finality or judgement. It marks the conclusion of a matter. Thus when we have been made righteous we have been made complete. The period of carnality has come to an end.

The one extra muscle brings the total number of individually different muscles attached to the sternum to ten. Ten is symbolic of the perfection of Divine order, nothing wanting. So we see represented here the fullness of YaHWaH's righteousness unveiled within us.

The sum of muscles attached to the sternum is therefore nineteen ($9 \times 2 = 18 + 1$). Bullinger has the following to say about nineteen;

Nineteen is a number not without significance. It is a combination of 10 and 9,

and would denote the perfection of *Divine order* connected with *judgement*. It is the *gematria* of Eve and Job.

This shows us that we will not be re-instated to the Divine without judgement.

It is interesting to note that both Eve and Job are related to this number. It was Eve who was initially deceived which led to the fall, whilst Job shows us the pathway to walk to come back into His Divine presence.

Job was perfect, upright, sincere and without guile. He had both wisdom and understanding through which he feared YaHWaH and departed from evil, but the true wisdom which always justifies YaHWaH and condemns oneself, he did not know. Job had to be humbled through affliction (the affliction of His Furnace, Isaiah 48:10, His Fiery Law) to come to see the sovereignty of YaHWaH. That is, he had to come to the realisation of the first commandment! Until a man comes to this realisation he cannot know himself or Elohim.

The life story of Job is therefore illustrated in the muscle articulations of the sternum, and has been written down for all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear - showing us the pathway back into the garden, the humbling of man so that he may be made divinely righteous, this is 'the purpose of YaHWaH';

James 5:11; 'Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the purpose of YaHWaH; that He is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.'

As you study the life of Job, you see that the purpose of the affliction and judgement that Father put Job through was so that Job would come to realise Father's sovereignty and rest in that revelation. The result being that he saw his own vileness and justified Father. This is the path each of us are walking as we make our way back to the garden.

Job 42:2-6; 'I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'

YaHWaH turned the captivity of Job and blessed him more than he had ever been blessed before when he prayed for his friends. So we see in this that Job became a comforter and physician to his friends - truly out of his belly flowed rivers of living water - he was now a possessor of true righteousness.

Job 42:10; 'And YaHWaH turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends...'

YaHWaH blessed Job in his latter end. When the judgement was completed the Divine

order, or presence, could be revealed. It was not Job's wisdom, good works or merit but it was YaHWaH who gave and blessed. Thus it is through coming to the end of ourselves that we may live in peace and have the very Glory of YaHWaH flowing from us. What a wonderful encouragement this account of Job is for us! May we ever keep in mind our ultimate destiny!

1 Peter 5:6; *'Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of Elohim, that he may exalt you in due time.'*

Conclusion

How wonderful are the lessons portrayed in the Sternum! It is my prayer that we, having become the servants of the living Elohim through Yahshua, may keep in view the wonderful destiny of our re-uniting with Him in righteousness as we travel the road of affliction and judgement. May Father humble us and impart to our hearts His sovereignty. May each of us pass through His sword so that we may come before Him in true righteousness.

Romans 6:22; *'But now being made free from sin, and become servants to Elohim, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.'*