

The Stirring of the Water and Bible Integrity

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Though skeptics have leveled many charges against the integrity of the Bible through the centuries, proof of its divine origin remains self-evident. Nevertheless, some claim that the Bible endorses the common superstitions that characterized the primitive peoples of antiquity. One such case pertains to the sick man who lay beside the pool of Bethesda. The NKJV reads:

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, [waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.] Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked (John 5:1-9, emp. added).

Observe that the man (and "a great multitude" of others) believed the popular conception regarding the alleged periodic appearance of an angel to stir the water of the pool. The Bible is not to be blamed as giving sanction to this idea merely on the basis of the personal sentiments held by the people of the day, since the Bible merely reports **their** beliefs—as indicated by the sick man's own remarks. Jesus certainly said nothing to give that belief credibility. However, the words indicated above by the bracketed bold type are couched in authorial narration, which would imply that the inspired writer of the book of John also believed the superstition. Does the Bible, in this instance, give credence to an outlandish notion, thereby casting suspicion on its inspiration?

In the first place, granted, the idea of God sending an angel to stir the water of a pool, at which point the water is invested with miraculous healing properties, is a nonsensical notion that would be uncharacteristic of the God of the Bible (in contrast to the God of the Quran—see Miller, 2005b, pp. 60-61). Jesus might have helped the man get to the water, but He did not do so. Second, nor would God place poor sick folk in competition with each other, allowing only one individual to benefit from the healing, since He shows no partiality (Deuteronomy 10:17; Acts 10:34; Romans 2:11). Third, such an occurrence would contradict the Bible's own explanation for the **purpose** of miracles—the miracle of healing not being simply to heal or relieve suffering (see Miller, 2003, 23[3]:17-23).

The ultimate answer to this challenge to the Bible's integrity is found in the fact that the last

part of John 5:3 and the entirety of verse four were not a part of the original inspired autograph by John. The oldest, most reliable manuscripts omit the words, and with near unanimity scholars agree that the preponderance of the evidence shows its spurious status to be "virtually certain" (Metzger, 1971, p. 209). Renowned Greek scholar A.T. Robertson observed: "It is a relief to many to know that the verse is spurious" (1932, 5:79). Most English versions omit the words from the text altogether, relegating them to a footnote, including the ASV, ESV, et al. Among churches of Christ, J.W. McGarvey (n.d., p. 195), Guy N. Woods (1989, p. 95), David Lipscomb (1962, p. 74), George DeHoff (1981, 5:297), Frank Pack (1975, pp. 84-85), Burton Coffman (1974, p. 138), and B.W. Johnson (1886, p. 86) acknowledged the words are not a part of the original. [NOTE: Those who are fearful that the integrity of the text of the Bible is compromised by the reality of textual variants need to be reminded that the world's foremost textual critics have demonstrated that currently circulating copies of the New Testament do not differ substantially from the original (see Miller, 2005a, "Is Mark....," 25[12]:89-95).]

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R&R RESOURCES

As the hype and propaganda by liberal politicians and Hollywood entertainers continues to fuel the debate over embryonic stem-cell research, new evidence once again has demonstrated the ongoing success of adult stem-cell research (Serafini, et al., 2007). Stem cells from adult bone marrow, “multipotent adult progenitor cells” (MAPCs), were injected into mice whose immune cells had been neutralized by radiation. The MAPCs replenished the bone marrow, spleen, peripheral blood, and lymph nodes of the immunodeficient mice (Williams, 2007). What’s more, none of the recipient mice developed tumors—an ongoing problem with the use of transplanted embryonic stem cells (ESCs). The conclusion? “The potential of long-term culture followed by tumor-free cell transfer thus gives MAPCs a therapeutic advantage over both ESCs and HSCs” (Williams). In other words, adult stem-cell research continues to produce effective results, while embryonic stem-cell research has yet to demonstrate significant value (see Harrub, 2006; Harrub and Thompson, 2004).

The moral, spiritual, and biblical issue is very simple: the shedding of innocent blood is a despicable thing to God (Proverbs 6:17). Solomon warned: “My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, ‘Come with us, let us lie in wait to shed blood; let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause... My son, do not walk in the way with them, keep your foot from their path; for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood” (Proverbs 1:10-16, emp. added). Even

if embryonic stem cells one day were shown to be beneficial to the infirmed, saving one human at the expense of another is not the right solution. Indeed, murdering millions of innocent babies through both abortion and embryonic stem-cell research is the evil scourge of our time (cf. Jeremiah 19:5; 32:35).

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Following the Toucan’s Nose to a Designer



Kyle Butt

The writers and editors of *National Geographic* are notoriously guilty of saturating their articles with evolution. That is why it is almost humorous to read articles in the periodical that seem to slip by the editors—articles that, if read in a straightforward manner, defy evolution. For instance, in the December, 2006 issue, the editors included a tiny, one-page article titled “Power Beak.” This article discusses the beak of the toucan. John Eliot, the author of the article, interviewed Marc André Meyers, “a materials scientist at the University of California, San Diego.” Meyers believes the unique design of the toucan beak could be used to produce strong, lightweight materials used in vehicles.

Meyers describes the toucan beak as a beautiful structure. He then goes into some engineering detail:

The surface is made of keratin, the same material in fingernails and hair. But the outer layer isn’t a solid structure. It’s actually many layers of tiny hexagonal plates, overlapping like shingles on a roof. The interior is different from the shell, made of bone. It consists of a light yet rigid foam made of little beams and membranes. And some areas of the beak are hollow” (Eliot, 2006, p. 30).

On the same page, to the right of Meyers’ comments, the reader can see two pictures from a microscope—one of the hard foam inside the beak and the other of the “shingle” layers of keratin. To the left of the comments there is a toucan

head and beak, in which the layers are shown in a cross-section-like diagram. The combined pictures look as though they are straight out of an engineer’s portfolio.

What is Eliot’s assessment of the toucan’s beak? In a simple, yet oh-so-telling, sentence, Eliot said: “[T]he toucan’s beak is ingeniously designed to be both strong and light weight.” Look closely at the wording. He says the beak is “ingeniously designed.” The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines the word “ingenious” as: “Marked by inventive skill and imagination. 2. Having or arising from an inventive or cunning mind; clever” (2000, p. 900, emp. added). Notice that the word “ingenious” implies an inventive or cunning mind. What inventive or cunning mind engineered the beautiful design of the toucan beak? It could not have been the evolutionary process, since evolutionists themselves admit that the process has no ultimate goals and no creative mind powering the system. The only logical answer is the supernatural mind of God. If the editors of *National Geographic* would only follow the nose of the toucan, they would find the ingenious Designer—and they would stop writing false, evolutionary propaganda.

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