

## Robotic Hand Points to God

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Science has done it again. What humans in past generations would never have thought possible is becoming a reality. *Associated Press* writer Ariel David recently reported on one of the most advanced scientific experiments ever done in the world of prosthetics. Twenty-six-year-old Paierpaolo Petruzzello was involved in a month-long research project in which scientists used special electrodes to attach a robotic hand to the nerves in Petruzzello's left forearm. The research team performed the study in order to see if Petruzzello could control the hand by triggering the correct nerves simply by thinking about it.

Amazingly, Petruzzello successfully manipulated the robotic hand using his mind. In fact, he stated: "It's a matter of concentration. When you think of it as your hand and forearm, it all becomes easier" (as quoted in David, 2009). The doctors left the electrodes in the young Italian's arm for a month. So successful was Petruzzello at controlling the hand, by the end of the month he could "wiggle the robotic fingers independently, make a fist, grab objects, and make other movements" (2009).

While it is true that science fiction movies and books like *Star Wars* feature such amazing technology, who would have ever thought that such astounding advancement would become a reality? Petruzzello stated: "It felt almost the same as a real hand" (2009). As remarkable as the study is, however, the new technology leaves many things to be desired compared to an "average" human hand. For one thing, no one knows how long the electrodes can be attached to the human nerves. Those in need of such prosthetic apparatuses need the technology to remain connected for years, not a few days. Second, the hand "obeyed the commands it received from the man's brain in 95 percent of cases" (2009). Of course, the human hand is far more efficient at responding to the brain's commands. In addition, as would be expected, the robotic hand is extremely expensive. The one-month long project cost approximately three million dollars. And, as the researchers concluded: "More must be done to miniaturize the technology on the arm and the bulky machines that translate neural and digital signals between the

robot and the patient" (2009). In truth, there is still an extremely long way to go before such technology begins to approach the capabilities of an average human hand.

Research like this underscores the astonishing intelligence necessary to produce a "working" hand. The project cost three million dollars, "took five years to complete and produced several scientific papers that have been submitted to top journals including *Science Translational Medicine* and *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*," according to Dr. Paolo Maria Rossini, the neurologist leading the research (as quoted in David, 2009). Brilliant men and women spent thousands of hours and millions of dollars, combining their immense intelligence and experience, to enable the month-long trial to be successful. Yet "more must be done" to equip the robotic hand to function on a practical level.

As amazing as this research is, how many of us would voluntarily swap our "ordinary" human hand for the latest robotic facsimile? The rhetorical answer is: "None of us." And yet we are being told by the majority of modern scientists and the media that the human hand arose by purely naturalistic, evolutionary processes over millions of years, while the inferior prosthetic hand was intelligently designed. The false evolutionary inference is simply untenable. If the inferior robotic hand necessitates intelligent design, by implication, the superior human hand must necessitate greater intelligence. How long will the greater-scientific world refuse to admit the truth that biological organs and systems can **only** be explained by an intelligent Designer? Indeed, as with all such research, this latest robotic hand points a steady index finger straight to the God of the Bible.

### REFERENCE

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It's no secret that the U.S. Government has been borrowing unprecedented amounts of money in an effort to stave off financial calamity (cf. Ip, 2009; Zuckerman, 2009). The sum of all recognized debt of federal, state, and local governments, international, private households, business and domestic financial sectors in America is now \$57 trillion (Hodges, 2009). The majority of that debt has accumulated just in the last three decades, with 79% (\$45 trillion) of total debt created since 1990. America is, in fact, the world's largest international debtor (Hodges).

So what? Is that bad? After leading the nation for 40 years, before departing this life, Moses delivered a magnificent speech to the new generation of Israelites pertaining to their imminent occupation of the Promised Land. In his farewell remarks, God empowered him to articulate critical factors necessary to national survival. He also delineated the specific curses that would afflict the nation if it turned its back on God and His Word, as well as the specific blessings that would enrich the nation if the citizens maintained their commitment to God. Here are insightful, relevant social, political, and economic factors that beckon the attention of the United States of America.

Consider just one: In view of the economic woes facing our own nation, one feature in particular ought to give every American pause. It is listed first in the series of blessings that would characterize the nation if its citizens and leaders would "diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all

His commandments" (Deuteronomy 28:1). That blessing? "You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow" (vs. 12). If, on the other hand, the nation declined **spiritually** by failing to obey God and keep His commandments, aliens would lend to them (vs. 44).

Economists, politicians, and all Americans should beware. The God of the Bible has articulated precisely the details of national success as well as national catastrophe. We would do well to give sober consideration to them. America is moving swiftly down a pathway to destruction—and that end result will be due to a **single factor**: America's shift away from offering due respect and submission to God and Jesus Christ. The solution?

If you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God,...the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God (Deuteronomy 28:1-2).

Dave Miller

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 Ip, Greg (2009), "We're Borrowing Like Mad. Can the U.S. Pay It Back?" *The Washington Post*, January 11.  
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## QUESTION & ANSWER

**Q** Did Matthew, Mark, and Luke all refer to the same calling of Peter, Andrew, James, and John?

**A** Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record Jesus summoning Peter, Andrew, James, and John to leave their fishing nets behind and become fishers of men (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11). However, whereas Matthew and Mark's accounts of the event are nearly identical, Luke positions the account at a different location in His record and reports several other details that Matthew and Mark exclude.

Matthew and Mark both record the calling immediately **following** their accounts of the temptations of Christ and the beginning of His ministry (Matthew 4:1-17; Mark 1:12-15) and **before** His healing of the demon possessed and the afflicted, including Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 4:23-25; 8:14-15; Mark 1:21-31). Luke positions Jesus' calling of these two sets of brothers **after** Jesus' healing of Peter's mother-in-law and a demon-possessed man (Luke 4:31-41). Furthermore, Luke includes several details in his record that Matthew and Mark omit: (1) The fishermen had left their boats and were cleaning their nets (Luke 5:2); (2) A multitude surrounded Jesus as He approached the fishermen (5:1); (3) Jesus taught the multitudes from Peter's boat (5:3); (4) Jesus instructed the fishermen to go to the deep part of the lake (5:4); (5) The fishermen's catch was great (5:6-7); (6) Peter confessed his sinfulness (5:8); etc.

Just as it is possible that Jesus' cleansed the temple twice (see Lyons, 2004), it is very possible that Jesus

may have told His disciples twice that they would be fishers of men: the first time recorded by Matthew (4:18-22) and Mark (1:16-20), and then a second time recorded by Luke (5:1-11). Consider also that even prior to Matthew and Mark's accounts of Jesus calling Peter and Andrew to become fishers of men, these two fishermen had already previously "followed" Jesus (John 1:35-42; see Lyons, 2007).

So what is the answer to the question? Did the synoptic writers all refer to the same calling in these passages? Although I tend to believe that these are two different callings, with Matthew and Mark recording an earlier encounter, and Luke a later one, one simply cannot be certain about the matter. Bible writers often arranged things differently because of their different purposes in writing. What's more, although Luke includes several more details in his account of the calling, it could be that he, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, was merely providing supplemental material. In either case, we can be sure that no discrepancies exist among these accounts—only differences that we would expect to find from inspired, **independent** writers.

Eric Lyons

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