

Afterlife and the Bible

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

We human beings find it very easy to live life as if we will be here forever. On occasion, we come face to face with death when a loved one or friend passes away. But the essence of daily living is such that it is easy to ignore the reality of death and the certainty of existence beyond the grave. Numerous ideas exist in the world regarding life after death—from annihilation to reincarnation. Islam speaks of “paradise” while Catholicism speaks of “purgatory.” While it does not answer all of our questions, the Bible nevertheless speaks definitively and decisively regarding afterlife.

The Bible teaches that human beings are composite creatures. Humans possess a fleshly body that is composed of physical elements made from “the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7). Unlike animals, humans also possess a **spiritual** dimension—made in God’s own image—that transcends the body and physical life on Earth (Genesis 1:26-27). God places within each prenatal person at conception a spirit that makes each individual a unique personality that will survive physical death, living on immortally throughout eternity (Zechariah 12:1). At death, the spirit separates from the body and exists in a conscious condition in the spirit realm (Genesis 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21-22). Thus the Bible defines “death” as “**separation**”—not “extinction” or “annihilation” (Thayer, 1901, p. 282; Vine, 1940, p. 276). Since “the body without the spirit is dead” (James 2:26), the separation of one’s spirit from one’s body results in the physical death of the body. But what about the spirit?

The clearest depiction of existence beyond physical death is seen in Luke 16:19-31. In this account, both men are said to have **died**. Wherever Lazarus went, angels transported him there. The rich man’s body was **buried**—but his person was in Hades where he was tormented in flames. The rich man could see and recognize Lazarus and Abraham. Abraham referred to the rich man’s former existence as “your lifetime.” Abraham made clear that their respective locations were irreversible. The rich man’s brothers still occupied their father’s house on Earth. The rich man’s plea to send Lazarus to his living relatives would require Lazarus to “rise from the dead” (vs. 31).

The term translated “hell” in verse 23 (KJV) is the Greek word *hades*, and is not to be confused with the term *gehenna*. “*Gehenna*” (found twelve times in the New Testament) refers to the place of eternal, everlasting punishment—the “lake of fire” where Satan, his angels, and all wicked people will be consigned after the Second Coming of Jesus and the Judgment. *Gehenna* is **hell**. On the other hand, “*hades*” (occurring ten times in the New Testament and paralleling the Hebrew Old Testament

term *sheol*) always refers to the unseen realm of the dead—the receptacle of disembodied spirits where dead people await the return of the Lord (Revelation 1:18). Hades is **not** hell.

Observe further that Luke 16 depicts Hades as including two regions: one for the deceased righteous, and a second for the deceased wicked. The former is referred to as the “bosom of Abraham” (meaning “near” or “in the presence of” Abraham—cf. John 1:18). Jesus referred to this location as “paradise” (Luke 23:43; cf. Acts 2:25-34). The term “paradise” is of Persian derivation, and referred to “a grand enclosure or preserve, hunting-ground, park, shady and well-watered” (Thayer, 1901, p. 480). The Jews used the term as “a garden, pleasure-ground, grove, park,” and came to apply it to that portion of Hades that was thought “to be the abode of the souls of the pious until the resurrection” (p. 480). The word is used in three senses in the Bible: (1) In the Septuagint (Genesis 2:8,9,10,15,16; 3:2,3,4,9,11,24,25), the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it refers to the literal Garden of Eden on Earth where Adam and Eve lived (*Septuagint*, 1970, pp. 3-5). It normally is translated “garden” in English versions; (2) It is used one time, in a highly figurative New Testament book, to refer to the final abode of the saved, i.e., heaven (Revelation 2:7); and (3) It is used in connection with the Hadean realm.

While Jesus, the thief, and Lazarus went to the paradise portion of Hades, the rich man went to the unpleasant area that entailed torment and flame—*tartarosas*, or Tartarus (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The occupants there await “the judgment of the great day.” Thus, Hades is a **temporary** realm that will be terminated at the Judgment (Revelation 20:13-14).

God gives people only their earthly life to prepare their spirits for their eternal abode (Hebrews 9:27). When a person dies, his or her body goes into the grave, while the spirit enters the Hadean realm to await the final Judgment. At the Second Coming of Christ, all spirits will come forth from Hades and be resurrected in immortal bodies (John 5:28-29; 1 Corinthians 15:35-54). All will then face God in judgment, receive the pronouncement of eternal sentence, and be consigned to heaven or hell for eternity.

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THE MALLEE'S TONGUE: TERRIFIC TEMPERATURE-TELLING TALENT

by Nathaniel Nelson

The modern inventions and innovations of man can be seen in almost every facet of our lives. The thermometer is one fine example of human ingenuity. Parents are familiar with taking their children's temperature (sometimes quite frequently). Insert a thermometer, and voilà!—several seconds later, the temperature is displayed as a bar of mercury (or electronically), and one can read the temperature with ease. Even as we give homage to these fascinating devices, on occasion we tend to remain blind to the equally fascinating design that has been imprinted on the



Earth and its creatures by the Great Designer. Take the mallee fowl, for example. Before man ever even thought of creating the simplest of contraptions, this bird was assessing temperature for its unborn babies. As the apostle Paul put it: "God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Corinthians 1:27). Man's conceptions may be mighty, but God has put them to shame with a bird as simple as the mallee.

The Outback of Australia is home to this magnificent bird. The hot temperatures and dry climate do not deter the mallee, though. During its mating season, the male creates for its partner's eggs a nest that has an average circumference of 70 feet, and is over 3 feet in height. In the 1700s, the first white settlers came upon the mallee fowl's nests and, due to the unbelievable size of these sandy dunes, at first believed that they were aborigine burial grounds (Junor, 1998).

In order to make its nest, the male must first dig out a hole in early winter. Over the course of the winter, the mallee will begin

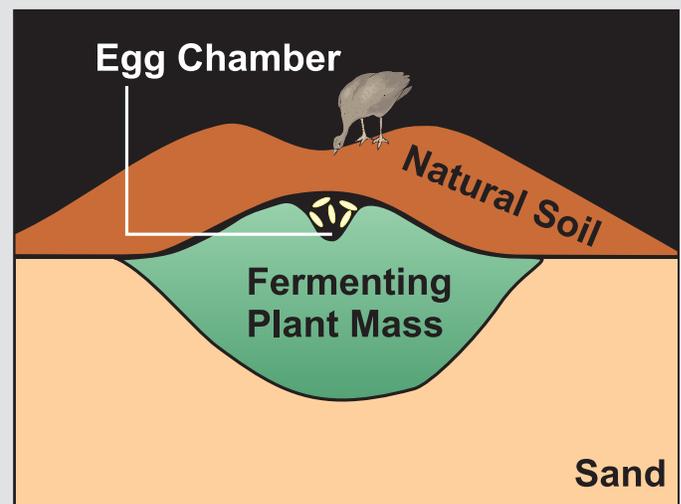
to place sticks and other brush inside the hole, forming a canopy of litter across the top. As spring begins, the mallee fowl will cover the debris with a layer of sand to allow for fermentation of the litter beneath the surface. The nest will remain in this state until mating season (autumn). At this point, the nest has been thoroughly warmed by the decomposed waste. The male makes a hole in the top of the mound, where the female then lays a single egg. About a week later, the male will make another hole and the female will lay another egg. This process goes on until there are about eighteen eggs in the nest.

But building a nest is only half the battle. The other half involves temperature maintenance in the mound. This job, once again, is left to the male mallee. Several times a day, the male inserts his beak into the pile of debris and sand. He proceeds to stick out his tongue, which is such a good thermometer that it can measure a temperature change as small as $1/10$ of a degree! After assessing the temperature, the male can act accordingly. If the nest is too hot, he removes some of the sand covering the nest. If the nest is too cold, the male adds sticks to produce more heat, and sand to insulate the mound from the surroundings. The temperature must be kept at **exactly 33 degrees Celsius**, and must be maintained to within one degree in order for the unborn chicks to survive while still in the nest.

This scenario gives rise to important questions: (1) How did the mallee fowl "know" to pile sticks and other debris inside the nest in order to moderate the temperature? (2) Why (and how) did such a temperature-evaluating device arise (in the form of a tongue)? Tough questions—the answers to which lie in the intricate design of this amazing bird that is attributable to the Great Designer.

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A.P. INTERNS

Q Is it wrong for Christians to use infertility drugs such as Clomid and Femara?

A Clomiphene citrate (commonly sold as Serophene and Clomid) and letrozole (sold as Femara) are medications used to stimulate ovulation. These drugs “trick” the brain into thinking the ovary is not producing an egg. The brain responds by increasing the production of the hormones that are responsible for stimulating egg development. Both drugs work in a similar fashion, but letrozole is cleared quickly from body, and is believed to be less likely to affect the uterine lining.

The side effects associated with these medications are normally minor, and may include hot flashes, mood disturbances, nausea, headaches, hostile cervical mucous, visual disturbances, ovarian enlargement and occasionally multiple pregnancies. Often, many of these side effects disappear with the onset of ovulation. However, bear in mind that women’s bodies are different from one another, and as such, their reactions to these infertility drugs vary tremendously.

The pills are normally taken on days 5-9 of a woman’s cycle. Patients are routinely started on a lower dosage, which is increased in the

succeeding cycles. (A lower dosage also helps minimize hormonal imbalances that sometimes plague women during treatment.)

Clomid, Serophene, and Femara do not require injections, and do not involve any manipulation of the egg or sperm. They are simply medications used to “spur on” the brain to produce eggs and proceed through ovulation. There are no increased risks of miscarriage or congenital birth defects when compared to couples who conceived without fertility treatment.

These medications do not produce multiple embryos that will wind up discarded or frozen. Their use also does not introduce a third party into a married couple’s life, as is the case with donor sperm. This fertility treatment appears to be safe for both the user and potential offspring, and it upholds the sanctity of life. Thus, Christian women who have been medically evaluated and are having trouble with egg production and ovulation can rest assured that these medications do not violate biblical principles. While these medications have proven effective for many couples, potential patients should bear in mind that these drugs are incapable of resolving all fertility problems.

Brad Harrub

IN THE NEWS

Before the last spadeful of dirt fell to the ground, scientists already knew that their discovery authenticated specific accounts found in the Bible. And this time, they were willing to say they were **100% sure**—something that rarely happens in the field of archaeology.

On December 23, 2004, archaeologists identified what they say is the remains of the Siloam Pool in which Jesus healed a man who had been blind from birth (John 9). In John’s account, Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay and then told him: “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (v. 7). The Bible records that after the man complied with Jesus’ instructions, his blindness was cured.

Archaeologist Eli Shukron observed: “The moment that we revealed and discovered this four months ago, we were 100 percent sure it was the Siloam Pool” (“Archaeologists...,” 2004). In fact, archaeologists discovered that water still flows through what was once considered a pristine pool used by the Jews for ritual immersions for purification.

Exactly why are the archaeologists from the Israeli government’s Antiquities Authority so sure they have found the Siloam Pool? In addition to its location, they also discovered biblical-era coins marked with Jewish writing, pieces of pottery, and even a stone-bottle cork.

Roni Reich of Haifa University—one of the excavation leaders—noted: “We have excavated it and dated it very accurately with coins found in the cement which the pool was built of” (as quoted in Tostevin, 2004). The earliest coins to be found dated from the middle of the century before the birth of Jesus.

Reich noted that the stone-lined pool has steps leading into it from all sides. Thus far, one side of the pool, two corners, a part of the esplanade around it, and the water channel leading into it have been uncovered. Archaeologists are currently negotiating with the Greek Orthodox Church, which owns the land, to continue the dig. Amazing, is it not, that weaknesses keep turning up in the evolutionary theory, and yet the Bible continues to be authenticated?

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Brad Harrub

