

Dinosaur Fossil Discoveries

Commentary of March 22, 2007 — *Byte Show* Q&A and a New Radio Show

New Dinosaur Finds

My wife and I recently attended a presentation at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry here in Portland. Freelance paleontologist Nate Murphy gave a slide presentation about a remarkable dinosaur fossil discovered in July 2000 on a Montana dig site. Murphy is the Research Director of the Judith River Dinosaur Institute in Malta, Montana. The dinosaur fossil has been named Leonardo and the animal was a duck billed dinosaur. It is considered to be the best preserved dinosaur in the world. This is certainly the case, as Murphy explained the fossil.

What is remarkable about this find is the incredible state of preservation, for a creature that has been fossilized and dead for (so says Murphy) some 77 million years. You can view the great photos of the dinosaur fossil at <http://www.montanadinosaurdigs.com/brachleo.htm>.

Murphy, who is rather a unique character himself, told the audience about the unique features of the fossil. **First**, it was unique because it appears that the entire dinosaur is preserved, not just its bones. There are patterns of scales and skin, which are partially fossilized, but the patterns remain nonetheless. This means, says Murphy, that it may be able to determine the color pattern of the dinosaur.

Second, because the body is complete, there are body cavities (not just bones) which give information on the structure of the internal organs of the dinosaur. In other words there is a third dimension to this fossil. They possess a full 3-dimensional structure of the dinosaur. They are able to conduct full x-ray studies of the bones, still attached to skin layer (although only bone shows up on x-rays).

Third, Murphy stated explicitly that the state of preservation of Leonardo will allow them to conduct a non-destructive CT scan of the entire body structure. A CT scan will allow researchers to create a full 3-D model of the body of Leonardo, inside and out, rotate it, and perhaps with additional data, to simulate movement (as they do with recent TV dinosaur computer animation sequences). Thus far they have been able, with the CT scan, to examine the interior of the chest cavity that shows remains of the heart area. If the scan yields recognizable results, and if the results show that heart had four chambers (like birds or mammals, reptiles have three chambers), that would prove beyond doubt that this dinosaur and probably most large dinosaurs were warm blooded. I was quite surprised. The results of the CT scans should be interesting. Of course, this might mean that dinosaurs were something else other than reptiles. I do not think anyone knows what that "something else" would be.

Fourth, because they have so much more information than usual, it may be possible to determine the gender of the animal. Determining Leonardo's gender may yield further information so sex indicators can be determined in fossil bone, compare this fossil with others of the same kind, and determine male/female ratios for this dinosaur type. It is believed the animal was 3 or 4 years old when it died. This indicates a very fast growth rate. It was 22 feet long and weighed as much as perhaps 2 tons. And it was just a kid!

Fifth, soft tissue was discovered in the dinosaur fossil. Not only did it have scales, but as I said it also had skin. Only parts of Leonardo's body were fossilized. Some tissue was mummified. While this was not the first dinosaur where soft tissue has been reported (it's the

third), this fossil may yield the greatest amount, and demonstrate clearly that soft tissue has survived from dinosaurs.

Forgive my skepticism, but I find it hard to believe that soft tissue had not deteriorated, dissolved, or fossilized over the presumed 77 million years since this creature died! From the rock formation where Leonardo was discovered and the state of preservation at Leonardo's death, it appears it was immediately covered in mud which usually solidifies into stone, only leaving bones. It's one thing to mummify a body in a peat bog for 5,000 years or preserve a deliberately mummified Pharaoh for 3,500 years, but to have a mummified dinosaur body for 77 million years, begs credibility.

Sixth, the excellent quality of the preservation of the bones show unambiguous close connection with other bones surrounded by skin. This in turn gives information of where muscles were attached to the bones, how large the muscles were, and other surprising discoveries. Range of motions computer studies can be more reliably conducted. The lung capacity can be determined, as well as evidence as to whether the animal was bipedal or walked on all four legs.

Seventh, food was found in the upper gastrointestinal tract as well as the lower tract. And, the food was different in each location. Remnants of the food were also analyzed through pollen samples in the upper and lower gastrointestinal tract which showed the food what Leonardo ate. Different foods in the upper and lower tracts indicate that Leonardo traveled and ate a variety of foods. At least 40 different kinds of plants have been determined.

Eighth, according to Murphy, because of the discovery of soft tissue in the creature, they are able to extract DNA! The samples for DNA will be taken from the bone marrow. Murphy stated that this animal had a large number of teeth. In the question period I asked him if they could extract DNA from tooth root material as well. He hesitated, smiled, and said yes, they were indeed looking into that as an alternate source for DNA material, if they do not have enough from bone.

Murphy even went so far as to state, surprisingly (at least surprising to me), that re-constructing a dinosaur from DNA was no longer an outrageous fantasy. In other words, the scenario envisioned by Michael Crichton in the books and movies *Jurassic Park* are no longer considered ridiculous or absurd. Murphy was quite serious on this point. Now this does not mean that it is technically possible at the present time, but Murphy seemed to believe it may be attempted in the future, perhaps using large reptiles or crocodilians as hosts for gestation until eggs could survive outside of the host. It might be feasible (at least in the imaginations of scientists) to produce dinosaur cells, perhaps a fetus. I think this is doubtful, however.

A short 5 minute video with Nate Murphy talking Leonardo can be found at <http://www.exn.ca/video/?video=exn20021029-oldino.aspx>. The only difference from the somewhat older video and the presentation we saw was that on the video Murphy said that skin color cannot be determined, while in the presentation he said that Kodak may have a way to determine the color of Leonardo's skin. So, we may be able to know the color pattern of this type of dinosaur. Did they have one single color, or were they mottled (like camouflage)?

Murphy said that the Discovery Channel is producing a special TV documentary about Leonardo and it will detail the many findings from this one find. It will be called "[Dinosaur Resurrection](#)" because it will give new life to dinosaur studies. (Click on the title to view a short video.) The preview video is presented in a respectful manner, giving almost a mystical aspect to a wonderfully preserved example of one of God's creations. Several major corporations are helping with various techniques to assist in analyzing Leonardo. Kodak's participation with new techniques of non-destructive testing will help (perhaps) determine Leonardo's skin color. See the Kodak "[The Leonardo Project](#)" website for information about their participation.

Many people love dinosaurs. Does the Bible talk about dinosaurs? The description of behemoth in Job 40: 15–24 seems to describe a large sauropod dinosaur. Leviathan in Job chapter 41

seems to describe a dragon-like creature (see also Psalm 74:14, 104:24–30; and Isaiah 27:1). No animals alive today fit those descriptions. While Scripture describes creatures that existed in the time of Job and after, unlike anything seen today, a few of which may have been preserved from the flood on Noah's ark, they more likely were recreated by God after the flood. See Dr. Martin's article "[Creation of Life in Contemporary Times.](#)"

As more and more discoveries are made by scientists around the world, their evolutionary views will become more untenable, while the biblical view will become more attractive as discoveries force scientists to acknowledge God and even the written Word of God.

Question and Answer

I wish I could answer all questions that we receive, but time does not allow me to do so. I try to answer several questions with one answer. Often answers to questions are available already on the ASK website, although sometimes searching (even research!) is necessary, both in your Bibles, and on the ASK website.

On the internet radio program [The Byte Show](#), GeorgeAnn Hughes and I have been going through the entirety of Dr. Martin's book *101 Bible Secrets*. (Scroll down to my name and the programs.) We have completed the book (except for the appendices, which we shall do later), and all of the sessions (17 in all) will be put online on the ASK website, incorporated into the *101 Bible Secrets* Table of Contents page online at <http://www.askelm.com/secrets/index.asp>.

As a result of those shows I received this inquiry:

QUESTION: I thought I heard on GeorgeAnn's *101 Bible Secrets* series that it was said that everybody will be saved and nobody (i.e., humans) will spend forever in hell. Is that true? And if that is true, then why should people stop sinning? God Bless your answer.

ANSWER: [I answered this question, but I am expanding my answer for you here:] You are correct in your understanding of what Dr. Martin wrote in his book *101 Bible Secrets*. It is God's will for all men (all human beings) to be saved, as well to come to a full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). God's will is supreme, **EVEN OVER YOUR WILL**, and my will. God's will **SHALL** be done. Your will has no part in your salvation, which is accomplished by God's grace through Christ, given to all men without exception (2 Timothy 4:10). Everyone shall, eventually, conform their will to God's will, and they shall do so "willingly."

This can only come about through God changing our hearts. He will change everyone's heart, for some it will occur in this lifetime but for most people it shall take place after their future resurrection to physical life. Their change of heart shall occur during the Great White Throne judgment. That judgment will be one of justice, to be sure, with punishment, certainly, but it will also be educational, instructing those people **FOR THE FIRST TIME** about the grace of God and Christ's actions on our behalf as our Savior. You and I are receiving that instruction at this time. Even most Christians are ignorant of that grace from God that will save all mankind.

While every human being is subject to vanity and sin because we all partake of Adam's flesh, likewise we are all subject to God's grace (according to His time frame) through Christ (Romans 5:12–21).

You ask the question: why should people stop sinning? Your question seems to say that we have the power to stop sinning, which we do not have, or that a cessation of sinning will somehow give righteousness to us. It will not. While we have the power to sin or not sin in any particular instance or in any particular moment of time, overall we have a compulsion to sin from birth through Adam. Only God through Christ can rescue us, **AND HE SHALL DO SO!!!**

I hope you continue on your journey of discovery in God's Word.

David Sielaff, Director, ASK

A New Radio Show

Thanks to another listener of the *Byte Show* presentations, I was recommended to a radio show called *Ghostly Talk* which deals with subjects regarding supernatural and paranormal phenomena. I was on the show on March 18, 2007. You can listen to it at <http://www.ghostlytalk.com/archives/lindagodfrey3.mp3>. Only my portion of the show is on that link (not the other two guests in the two hours before me). It may take a while to load and there is introductory music, so move the scale forward about 5 minutes into the program.

The hosts were interested in having me speak about Dr. Martin's research on the site of the Jerusalem Temple, and they just let me talk. I took the opportunity to speak on other topics as well. After the show, the hosts put a nice comment on their website: **"In our third hour we had our minds blown by David Sielaff. I'm still spinning...just listen!!"** They told me after the show that they did not even take an advertising break because they were so interested in what I was saying. I would be pleased to be on their show (or other shows) at a later date.

The response by the hosts was very gratifying. It seemed that they were pleased with what I was presenting, talking in a jovial but no-nonsense manner. Some may question my going on a show that features and explores paranormal subjects. However, as I told the hosts of *Ghostly Talk*, all the phenomena they discuss is related. All such things relate to the Bible.

I would rather they hear truth told in a no-nonsense manner rather than the usual reincarnation, immortal soul, and New Age material put forth by most of their other guests. They seemed to appreciate that sentiment, even if they perhaps did not agree.

Speaking Engagements

I am willing to speak anywhere to most any group about the biblical, historical, and theological issues that are dealt with on the ASK website, and to promote the work of Dr. Ernest Martin.

In early June 2007 I have been invited to speak at a gathering in Albany, NY. I shall inform you of details as we approach the event. Other public speaking engagements are being discussed, including a series of lectures here in Portland, Oregon.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com