



Sunday (Fathers' Day) – June 16, 2024

How the Giraffe Got Its Name

Dear Thomas,

Recently, while rummaging through a pile of notes entitled “Stories that didn’t make it into the Bible,” I found this **mythical account** of a discussion between God and His angels about...

The Creation of the Giraffe

After the first five days of creation, God assembled His angelic council called the “Creation of Animals Taskforce” (CAT for short) and enlisted them in **the project of creating the animal kingdom**.

“As you know,” said God, “We have arrived at the sixth day of creation where we populate the earth with animals. This is a big job! Actually, I’m **already half way through with the project**, but I’ve called you together because I have a special task for you.”



“In filling the earth with all kinds of amazing and diverse animals, I noticed that **there is one creature that needs angelic attention.**”

(God of course, knew what He was going to do, but He was setting the angels up for their big assignment.)

“Your mission is to come up with a **special type of animal** that will greatly beautify the world and also be a source of endless fascination

for all the other animals on the earth.”

“There’s only one trick,” He said. “This animal has to be **both awe-inspiring and hilarious** at the same time.”

The angels were puzzled at that, so **St. Michael** the Archangel, the spokesman, asked, “Lord, you mean you want us to invent *humans*?”

“NO, no, definitely not humans! I’ll **take care of that particular fiasco**. Even the smartest angels can’t handle a project like that,” said God.

"I want you to come up with **a true masterpiece** of the animal kingdom, and whatever you decide, I'll create. The sky's the limit, so to speak."



The CAT Task Force

So the angels immediately got to work. They elected **St. Gabriel** the Archangel as their leader, and he began to take suggestions.

"Okay, brethren, let's brainstorm. **What should this animal look like?**"

One angel spoke up and said, "Well, it can't be small and cuddly like a rabbit because that's not awe-inspiring enough, as per the directive, I mean."

Another offered, "He's right. It's **got to be powerful**, but not like a rhino eitehr because those guys aren't hilarious *at all*. God must have left out the funny bone. They don't have the slightest sense of humor."

All the angels nodded their heads in agreement: "Yeah, *one* of those is enough."

"I have an idea," blurted an angel from the back, "Let's **make it look like a horse** but *bigger!* That's impressive, right?"

Another angel aid, "We can give it really long legs with **knobby knees** that make him even taller than the horse so he towers over all the other animals. But no one will take those knees seriously, so we get the element of humor in there too."

"I like it," said Gabriel. "But it just seems like we're **still missing something.**"

Then the majestic **St. Raphael** the Archangel stood up, and all eyes were on him. He spoke with great solemnity:

"I propose that we give this creature **an amazingly long neck.**"

"*WHOOOOA!!!*" chanted all the angels in unison.

"We're talking **six feet of neck!**" said Raphael. Cries of "*Here, here!*" and raucous cheers issued from the crowd.

"That's it!" said Gabriel. "That will fulfill our dual criteria of awesomeness and hilarity at the same time."



The Heart-Brain Solution

"Well, I don't mean to be a spoiler," said Uriel, who was **a pretty no-nonsense guy** in matters of the natural world.

"That long neck looks nice on paper, but remember: this is going to be **a flesh and blood creature**. Hello?! How are we going to get the blood all the way up that long neck to the brain?"

"Hmm, hadn't thought of that," said Gabriel. "Any suggestions, guys?"

One angel said, "Well, we'll just have to **make his heart big** to pump all that blood so high."

"True," said Uriel, "But the heart would have to be so huge that his body would need to be the size of a hippopotamus to hold it. Can you imagine such a long neck **on the body of a hippo!**"

One of the more sarcastic angels said, “That wouldn’t be funny or impressive at all. That would be *an abomination*.” And they **all laughed** at the thought of it.



“Okay, okay, calm down everyone,” said Gabriel. “I think we all agree on that point: no hippo chassis. But what can we do to get enough blood to the brain **so he’s not fainting all the time?**”

Uriel said, “There’s a tricky solution to that, but I think it will work.”

“We’ll make *one half of his heart* large enough to pump the blood six feet upward against gravity. **The heart will be powerful enough** to get the blood all the way up there

but it’ll also be small enough to fit into the horse-like body of our design.”

“Amazing idea,” said Michael, “But wouldn’t that amount of blood pressure scramble his brains when it reaches his head? It would be even worse **when this animal bends down** to drink water.”

“I’ve got an idea for that too,” said Uriel. “We’ll just install a special mechanism, kind of like a massive sponge, at the base of the brain to **regulate the blood surge**. That’ll keep him from hemorrhaging or fainting even when he’s running or bending down to drink.”

The Stabilizers

“Impressive work! But that brings up another problem,” said Gabriel. “With all that bulk sitting on top of his knobby legs, he’s going to fall over every time he stands up **unless his feet are extra fortified**, like an elephant’s.”

“*No more elephants!*” chanted the angels again in unison. “We already have rhinos, hippos, and elephants—and now this? Where would we even get enough food to feed all those monsters?”

“I’ve got a solution,” said Raphael. “We’ll just **make the feet like big and round dinner plates** instead of horse hooves or elephant feet. Granted, he’ll look a little clunky tripping around on saucers—not exactly a thoroughbred—but you get my idea.”

“*Perfect!*” said, Uriel. “The plate-feet on the ground will stabilize his huge body and make sure he **doesn’t tip over** because of his height.”

“Then I guess we’ll also have to make him **a herbivore** because the only food that high up in the air is going to be tree leaves.” (**The birds breathed a sigh of relief** at that.)

The funny angel in the back said, “Exactly. That also means we’ll have to give him **a long, sticky tongue**, so he can yank all those leaves off the trees. I mean, he won’t have hands to do that, will he?”

“No, we’re **definitely not doing hands!**” said Gabriel, shuddering in horror at the idea. “He’s funny-looking enough as it is.”



The Last Element

“Before we bring this to the Lord for His approval,” added Michael, “I have one final suggestion. It’s a bit of **psychological warfare**, but, as everyone knows, that’s my job.”

Nods of respect all around. “*Pray tell, Commander*” said Gabriel.

“Well, since this is going to be God’s most impressive creature of nature, I think we should give

him funny-looking horns on top of his head as a mockery of **that other horned creature**—He Whose Name Shall Not Be Uttered—who fell from grace.

At that, a flood of imprecations flew through the air: “Malefactor!”, “Apostate!”, “Foul Fiend!”, “Son of Perdition!” and other **untranslatable terms** from the angelic tongue.



“I get it, guys. I get it,” said Gabriel with a wave of his hand to stop the piling on.

“*That one* is not worthy of any more attention by this assembly, but I agree with Michael. The horns will certainly **put the bad guy in his place.**”

“Okay, then we’re settled,” he added. “No doubt this new creature we’ve come up with will fly through the approval process.”

Just then another enthusiastic angel asked,

“But what are we going to name it?”

“Hold on, that’s not for us,” said Gabriel. “Remember, **God gave the naming job to the man**, so we’ll have to sit back and let ourselves be surprised by what he comes up with.”

Then the angel in the back said, “Or *depressed*, as the case may be.”

Final Approval

When the angels presented their plan to the Lord of all creation, God looked upon it and saw that it was good...but He did think it looked a little like **it was designed by a committee** (which, of course, it was).

So, to finish the project, God added **a few final flourishes**: He splashed trapezoidal spots all over the huge body, gave it a wispy little tail, and—the *coup de grace*—huge eyes with long eyelashes (that would make its babies totally irresistible to animal lovers in the future.)

It was the perfect **impressive specimen of nature** that was *also* hilarious to behold.

Then God said, “Let there be...a long-legged, knobby-kneed, horse-like creature, with a long neck, a slimy tongue, a large heart, disc-like feet, and horns.” **And so the giraffe came to be.**

How the Giraffe Got Its Name

God then charged the angels of the CAT taskforce with presenting this amazing new creature to Adam for naming.

So the committee **chose St. Raphael** to descend to earth to give Adam a full briefing. (Raphael, after all, was the one who had suggested the long neck and the saucer feet.)

Upon seeing the man in the Garden, Raphael cried, “**Adam! I have a gift for you!**” Adam looked up with expectation, and Raphael added, “No, not *her*. She’ll join you later. You’ve got to finish naming the animals first.”

Then he presented the tall, knobby-kneed creature to Adam, who **craned his neck to see** the full view. “*WHOOOOA!*” Adam said (just like the angels when they heard about the neck!)

Quite overwhelmed, he stuttered, “Gee, Raph...I mean...” (Adam was still on a first-name basis with the angels at this point) “...this one is ... um ... um ... shall we say ... *interesting?*”



The creature hobbled over to that equally strange human creature and **bent down to look at him** more closely through large, curious eyes. The animal batted those



long eyelashes at him and, in a flash, slathered Adam's face with this long, slimy tongue.

"Ugggggh! Gee, Raph. What did you bring me?!" cried Adam.

Raphael was standing off to the side laughing his head off at the spectacle. **God's sense of humor was impressive!** And His purposes were accomplished in full, and wonderfully so, he thought.

"Hey Adam, the angels want to know what you're going to call him," Raphael said. Just then an idea came to Adam like **a lightning bolt out of Eden's blue sky.**

"Gee, Raph...since you brought me this, hmmm, *unusual* gift, I'm at a loss for words. All I can really say is, *Gee, Raph.* So, I guess that's what I'm going to call him."

"Later, when humans invent the alphabet, **they'll probably make it one word** and spell it *GIRAFFE*, but I'm sure they'll be totally oblivious as to his origins."

"You and I, however, will know how this animal got its name. Then we'll see who gets the last laugh," said Adam, as he wiped the giraffe slime off his face.

And so it was. **The giraffe thus entered into history** as God's most fascinating creation.

Thereupon Raphael went back to the heavenly realm **quite happy.**

He was happy that God's will had so perfectly come to fruition in nature, and he was happy because everything worked out just right on his mission.

He was **also a bit fascinated** that Adam had named a creature of the natural world after him. When he returned to break the good news to the CAT committee, they all had a good laugh about it.

So, now you know **how the giraffe got its name!** (And you can pretty much understand why this story never made it into the Bible.)



Features

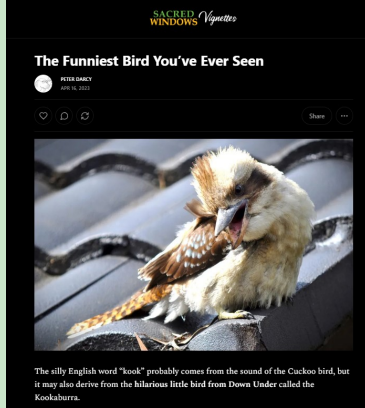
On a more serious note, make sure to check out **more factual information** about these delightful creatures. Click on the button to go to the website.

Also, I've done a number of other SW pieces about God's wonderful creatures. Take an enjoyable moment to read the two articles below.

[More Fascinating Giraffe Facts](#)

[The Funniest Bird You've Ever Seen](#)

[The Vast and Wonderful Array of Biblical Animals](#)



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A blessed Fathers' Day to all dads!

Peter Darcy

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