

Saturday "Sermon"

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Ötzi, the Iceman

CSI, or "Crime Scene Investigation" is one of the most popular shows on TV these days. Using the most sophisticated forensic techniques, the show attempts to solve complicated and bizarre crimes, often murders.

It's in that context that I want to introduce you to Ötzi, the Iceman. Ötzi is the name given to what *National Geographic* calls "the oldest intact member of the human family." Ötzi is a 5,300 year-old mummified corpse discovered in 1991 by hikers high in the Ötztal Alps on Italy's border with Austria.

Using isotope analysis and other sophisticated tests, scientists have determined where Ötzi lived in the valleys below, what his general health was at the time of his death, what season it was when he died, what his routine diet was, and even what he ate for his last meal.

The evidence became more intriguing in 2005, when a new high-resolution multi-slice CT scanning machine was able to examine a small triangular shadow behind Ötzi's left shoulder blade. The shadow turned out to be an arrowhead that had made a half-inch gash in Ötzi's left subclavian artery, causing him to rapidly bleed to death. Ötzi was murdered.

The conclusion of murder was reached for a number of reasons, chief among which are the facts that stones do not shape themselves into arrowheads by themselves, nor are they known to place themselves deep in human bodies on their own. Based on all normal rules of evidence, it seems clear that an intelligent being—another human—shaped that rock, affixed it to an arrow, and shot Ötzi in one of the prime locations hunters use to kill deer.

Two weeks ago, I was able to view the "Bodies" exhibit in Branson, Missouri. In this exhibit, scientists have painstakingly dissected human bodies in ways that display the wonders of their complexity, preserving them for study in display in such a way that they will last essentially "forever."

As I looked at those displays, I was reminded of *CSI*, and later about Ötzi. And I thought to myself, "The complexity and wonder of what I am seeing with my eyes—much less what I could see with an electron microscope—is such that any reasonable *CSI* investigator would have to conclude that intelligence lies behind it."

As the psalmist exclaimed, "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—and how well I know it" (Psalm 139:13-14). Will you join me in praising our Creator?