

Bible and the Headlines: Kidneys Remember

David Bachelor, PhD

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Despite the term ‘muscle memory,’ modern science locates all cognitive and learning functions in the gray cells between a person’s ears. Recent headlines suggest a cell does not have to be gray to remember.

The expansion of memory functions beyond the cranium was revealed in Nature Communications on November 7th. The paper was titled, “The Massed-Spaced Learning Effect in Non-Neural Human Cells.” The researchers used immature nerve cells and embryonic kidney cells for their study. The authors concluded, “Results show that behaviorally relevant features of cognition . . . can be studied in dividing, non-neural cells.”

Simplifying the extremely technical language of the research paper, the online journal Medical Xpress on Nov. 8 featured, “Memories Are Not Only in the Brain, Human Cell Study Finds.” The article explained how the nerve cells and kidney cells were “taught.” The cells were exposed, “. . . to different patterns of chemical signals—just like brain cells are exposed to patterns of neurotransmitters when we learn new information.” The researchers also “. . . engineered these non-brain cells to make a glowing protein, which indicated when the memory gene was on and when it was off.”

On November 9th, Neuroscience News.Com published their summary of the Massed-Spaced Learning Effect entitled, “Cells Beyond the Brain Show Surprising Memory Abilities.” The article revealed the salient point of the research “. . . suggests that learning from repetition could be a fundamental property of all cells.” The stage was set for another dissertation by the assertion, “Future research may explore how organs “remember” past experiences, with implications for health and disease.”

The original Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old and New Testaments, and the King James translation of the Bible into English, contain many verses that show cognitive and memory functions in organs other than the brain. This is particularly true of the heart and kidneys. The Old English word for kidneys is ‘reins.’ For example, when God revealed the fate of people who trust in wealth, the recorder of this vision stated, “My heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins (Psa 73:21 KJV). In Proverbs, a father who heard his son demonstrate wisdom said, “My heart shall rejoice, even mine. Yea, my reins shall rejoice, when thy lips speak right things” (Pro 23:14-15 KJV). The prophet Jeremiah said that God, “. . . triest the reins and the heart” (Jer 11:20). Jesus claims this ability for Himself, “I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts” (Rev 2:23). The Greek word translated as ‘reins’ in this verse is ‘nephros.’ This is the root word that 21st century doctors use for nephrology, the study of kidney functions.

Only recently have modern English translations of the Bible changed the location of all cognition to the brain. Maybe we don’t have to wait for future research, we just have to go back to what God has already revealed.