

Interview with a Jesus Lizard

by Ed Higgins

Interviewer: So, you walk on water, right? How is that possible?

Jesus Lizard: Well, I only run on water, and upright on my hind legs. Haha, if I tried just walking on water I'd sink quicker than St. Peter!

J. L.: I may be called a Jesus Lizard but I can't pull off Jesus' stroll atop the Sea of Galilee. Like Peter, I'd need a Savior's quick hand to haul me up from would-be drowning! Although, when I do sink I can stay under for as long as 30 minutes.

Interviewer: Oh, so you only run on water. What occasions such a feat?

J. L.: Well, danger, straight up! As you can see I'm no giant of a lizard. Yet size enough to make a tasty meal for some damn quetzal bird, or rainforest snake—whoa, snakes give me the willies. And fish will eat me, as well, given the chance!

Interviewer: Quite the abundant threats. But at thirty inches or so you're mostly that long skinny tail. Not much to eat there.

J. L.: Easy for you to say without a quetzal or owl swooping in to slurp me down tail and all! Ugh, makes my basilisk skin crawl, sheesh! Yes, at 30 inches I'm mostly tail, but it's apparently all tasty-edible stuff, haha.

J. L.: Anyway, I run my ass off when something wants to pounce and swallow me. On water it's a full 15 mph. And, as I said, when I sink I can stay under water for some 30 minutes. That's holding your breath an especially long time. You humans would be long gone obviously.

Interviewer: What do you do when you're not in escape mode running across a stream?

J. L.: Generally, I hang about soaking up the sun and catching a meal of midges, the occasional dragonfly. I love bird eggs when I find 'em unguarded in trees or ground nests. Even ripe fruit. Small frogs are a tasty yum! Obviously I'm an omnivore, hehe.

Interviewer: A necessary appetite to fill out those 30 inches, I'd say.

J. L.: Yeah, but I really, really have to stay alert for anything with an eye and appetite for tender lizard meat!

J. L.: Sometimes a snapping twig will set me off running across a stream or river to then sink into the relative safety of deep water. A descending shadow of a quetzal or owl bent on my destruction can usually catch my nervous upturned bulging eyeballs. We lizards have notable good eyesight for avoiding predators!

Interviewer: So, how do you actually stay up running on top of a stream—upright at that?

J. L.: Panic coupled with anatomy. See these flaps between my toes (holding a foot up for the interview's inspection). Those are my Jesus feet. I hit the water running, slapping my feet down hard on the water's surface.

J. L.: Those toe flaps turn to mini-cups churning tiny air bubbles holding me up. Mind, I'm not thinking of air bubbles or the mechanics of the thing, I'm just trying to save my lizard ass from judgment day's gnashing beak or chomping teeth.

Interviewer: Haha, do you at least offer up some kind of prayer as you panic run? You know, like Jesus taught: "Deliver us from evil," or maybe "If it's possible, may this cup be taken from me," that sorta thing?

J. L.: No such thoughts. Just me running scared like hell! Maybe a blurted expletive "Jesus Christ," as kind of an unintended prayer. Or making my escape to the far side of the stream a relieved forehead-wiping "Thank God," or "Holy shit, I made it!" Unintentional post-prayers you might say.

Interviewer: Well, it was a pleasure meeting you and I appreciate your taking the time.

J. L.: My pleasure. You likely know the basilisk legend about my gaze turning men to stone? Glad that didn't unnerve you doing the interview. Kept my eyes downturned, just in case. Haha, if I even look at myself in a mirror I can turn to stone. So that's a worry too!

