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Born Again?

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In John 3:3, Jesus told Nicodemus that a person must be born again to see the kingdom of God. In response Nicodemus asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (vs 4) From this response we can see that Nicodemus thought that Jesus was referring to a physical birth. To this misunderstanding Jesus responded, "Most assuredly,...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." (vs 5)

When Jesus said, "...born of water..." He was not referring to the physical birth. The water which Jesus referred to was baptism. One is born of the water and the Spirit when he obeys Mark 16:16 and other such passages. How do we know that the baptism mentioned in Mark 16:16 was water baptism? Consider some bible examples: The eunuch in Acts 8:36 knew that water was necessary. He asked, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" In Acts 10:47, Peter asked the question, "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized...?"

Lest someone think that it is the water that saves a person, we must remind ourselves of what Peter said. Peter explains that it is not the water that saves a person; instead, it is his obedience to God's command. (1 Pet. 3:21) A person is saved by the grace of God when he is born again of the water and the Spirit. If you have not been born again, then please choose to be born of the water and of the Spirit.

A Comparison of Efforts

Stephen Russell

Persistence, diligence, loyalty, passion, devotion are all characteristics, along with many others, that describe effort and receive almost universal praise. But the virtue of such characteristics depends entirely on the direction in which they are aimed. God finds many cases of such character to be disturbing. In Isaiah 57 God speaks much of the idolatry that Israel has been involved in. Then in verse 10 he points to the great effort they put forth in pursuing wickedness. "You were tired out by the length of your road, Yet you did not say, 'It is hopeless.' You found renewed strength, Therefore you did not faint." Again, through Malachi He compares the effort of the people in pleasing the governor to their efforts in pleasing God. "But when you present the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? And when you present the lame and sick, is it not evil? Why not offer it to your governor? Would he be pleased with you? Or would he receive you kindly?" says the LORD of hosts" (Mal. 1:8).

We often see someone who lacks devotion, diligence, passion, etc. for God and think that such a person lacks those qualities altogether. This is not always the case. In many cases we find people who are very successful in other facets of their lives and yet failures in their service to God. As we see in the examples above, it is clear that Israel knew how to push through difficulty to achieve their desires and to give of their best, what they lacked was the proper aim for their effort.

What about you? Have you pursued success in your professional career and through great effort achieved a success that will rust, decay, and be burned up? Put the same effort into pursuit of treasure that can never be destroyed (Matt. 6:19-

20). Have you pursued athletic skills which have some profit but at their highest level can only reward you with a perishable crown? Put that same devotion into exercising your faith which will lead to an eternal crown (1 Tim. 4:8; 1 Cor. 9:25). Have you been a good friend and opened your heart up to people of the world even as they draw you away from the greatest Friend we have in Christ? Use your personal skills to develop relationships with God's people and thereby be drawn toward Him and not away (2 Cor. 6:12-7:2).

There is surely a time and place for building up character where it is lacking. But sometimes we need to simply take what we have and point it in the right direction. The one talent man didn't need more talents to make him a good steward. What he needed to do was use his one talent well. Then more talents would have followed (Matt. 25:14-30). Are you using your qualities (whatever they are) in the pursuit of the only thing that will eternally matter? Will you give your greatest effort to God or squander it elsewhere?

Complexity of Design in Creation

by Greg Gwin

Imagine this conversation in the tiny bicycle shop in Dayton, Ohio, operated by Orville and Wilbur Wright . . .

Orville: "Hey, Wilbur, I've invented an engine. Let's go flying!"

Wilbur: "Well, what does the engine do?"

Orville: "It just runs."

Wilbur: "Does it power anything – like maybe a propeller or something?"

Orville: "I haven't developed a propeller yet."

Wilbur: "Well, what about wings? Have you figured that out yet?"

Orville: "Nope. Just an engine."

Of course, such a conversation would be utterly ridiculous. When the Wright brothers made their famous flight at Kitty Hawk, NC, they had to have all the parts perfected simultaneously. One part without all the others would have resulted in complete failure.

Now, apply this simple principle to our natural world and all the living things in it. For instance, could an eagle have begun its living history with wings, but no eyes? Could a man start out with a heart, but no liver or kidneys? The answers are obvious.

What we are describing here is a concept called 'irreducible complexity'. This phrase was coined by author Michael Behe in a book entitled [Darwin's Black Box](#). He powerfully argued that all of nature shows evidence of design, and thus a designer. Various components of complex living organisms could not have evolved separately. They all had to come together at once – by design.

We know that the designer and creator of all things is God. The proof for His supernatural creation is all around us. Examining this proof also delivers a death blow to the anti-scientific theory of evolution.

"For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God." (Hebrews 3:4)