

It's a Must Do

I was seriously considering death. No, not suicide! Not yet, anyway – ha! Rather, I was reading in Revelation Chapter Six where many saints were found under the altar in Heaven and we are told that they are those who were slain because of their testimony in Christ and their trust in His Word.

As I pondered this scene, it struck me that not only do we all die eventually – that it is inevitable, but that it is also necessary. More accurately, it is necessary in its time.

In John Chapter Three, one of the grand teachers of Israel, Nicodemus, came to Jesus and the conversation quickly turned to the theme of Christ's message. John the Baptist had preached, "Repent!" Jesus taught "Be reborn." This latter teaching was what Nick needed to know so, "*Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'*"

When the flabbergasted teacher mentally stumbled over this, Christ continued, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*"

Of course, most of us understand that being spiritually born again is fundamental to being a Christian but thinking that this simply means a sincere invitation to Jesus to come into our heart and be our Lord is missing the bigger and more beautiful message here.

To start with, this is one of those instances where the translation needs some clarification. You see, the words "born" and "again" in the original language actually mean "procreated" and "from on high" respectively.

Nick was indeed confused because he did not understand Jesus to be explaining a spiritual process. And it is this process that got me to musing. This is because procreation is not

simply the delivery, is it. It's not what we call being born. There is a different Greek word used for that in the Bible. The word Jesus used and what He was referring to was a grander and more complete picture – procreation.

If you'll permit me, it includes fascination → insemination → fertilization → gestation and then, at the appropriate time, expulsion or as we commonly say, delivery.

As I was pondering it, it struck me that as a believer, I'm still in the "procreated from on high" process. Each step in the physical procreation process has a corresponding spiritual reality. Let me explain.

Fascination – this is really the first step. When God made Eve way back in Genesis and presented her to Adam, he said, and I paraphrase liberally, "this is Wow-man." He was indeed impressed and attracted to her. Spiritually, we can liken this to the initial prompting of the Holy Spirit that attracts us to the Lord and His Word.

The following story from a new believer, Michael, highlights this:

"Although outwardly happy and content with every material need met, internally where no-one could see, I had an aching emptiness and longed to understand life's purpose. I remember even at seven years old considering what life was about whilst lying in bed and at eleven sitting in the garden alone on a summer's evening looking at the stars and being oppressed by melancholic thoughts about the vastness and anonymity of the universe and my place in it!"

"The turning point came when a Christian friend invited me to his church. The people were kind, genuine and loving and although I thought they were all slightly mad I was attracted to something I knew they had which I lacked which, although I didn't realize it, was inner peace. A few weeks later it was Easter and the leader of the church spoke on Jesus' Resurrection. At that moment I knew that I believed it, that it had actually happened and that therefore everything

Jesus had said about himself was true.”

Insemination – Sometime after His introduction, God told Adam and Eve to “*be fruitful and multiply*”. As a man’s seed is placed within his wife, so God’s Spirit plants the seed of the Living Word within our hearts. The Bible says that we are to, “...*love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever*” (1 Pet 1:22, 23)

Fertilization – what a marvelous mystery! The female egg is surrounded by so many sperm cells and yet just one penetrates and joins to create a new life. So it is that God’s Spirit is deposited in our hearts – one thought, one word, one prayer triggers a whole new spiritual life. And as we all know, the timing must be right for both the ‘divine encounter’ as well as the physical.

Gestation – Of course, this new life (physical or spiritual) must grow. It must be prepared for what’s ahead – a life outside the womb that it cannot even imagine. And so it is with baby

and believer. Every believer must grow spiritually within the womb of this earthly life. When the time is right – a time that God determines – the last step in the procreation process occurs...

Expulsion – Delivery is a painful event for mom and certainly a radical one for the new child. It’s transformative. Yes, death is a ‘delivery’ that is necessary. As believers, we are then finally born again into the presence of our eternal family.

Jesus told Nick, “*Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.*” (John 3:7,8)

With this, He clearly asserted that the culmination of the spiritual procreation process is a complete freedom – as wonderful and as mysterious to us as the wind (i.e. the Spirit) blowing where ever it desires. Jesus said, “*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*” (John 8:36) This spiritual delivery or birth into eternity frees us from the

constraints of this earthly life and the sinful nature.

And for us who believe, it is all in God’s hands, all in His time. For those without faith in Christ, death is the transition into an eternal separation from God more isolated, painful and bitter than they can imagine.

You can follow Buddha, Mohammed, or just your own fanciful notions but unless you are born again, procreated from on high – by God through Christ’s Spirit – life is pointless and death is just death eternally.

So seek Him out and open your heart to His awesome loving message. Be born again, live with purpose and grow in grace. Then death will be deliverance.