

Are Christians Really Born Again?

John 3:3: (NASB) *Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*



The Christian belief in being “born again” can be, at the very least, confusing. Does it mean you get to restart your life, kind of like a do-over? Is it beginning a brand new life in a brand new context? Does being born again mean you are the same person with the same issues, or are you somebody different? Is it living a new spiritual life in place of our present physical life - “once in grace, always in grace”? Does being “born again” actually mean what we think it means? To figure all of this out, we need to not only have a clear understanding of context, but we also need to have a good sense of some specific Greek words

and how they are used.

The entire “born again” belief begins with this conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus:

John 3:1-3: (NASB) *¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; ²this man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him. ³Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born <1080>** again he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Jesus’ entire answer will focus on the source of his power, God’s Spirit, and how it works in this age.

We need to clearly understand the phrase “born again.” First, the word *born*:

Born: Strong’s #1080 *gennao*; to procreate (properly, of the father, but by extension of the mother); figuratively, to regenerate

King James Version translates this word: bear, beget, be born, bring forth, conceive, be delivered of, gender, make, spring



These examples translate this word in the masculine sense of “begetting” (conceiving), not in the feminine sense of giving birth:

Matthew 1:2: (KJV) Abraham **begat <1080>** Isaac; and Isaac **begat <1080>** Jacob; and Jacob **begat <1080>** Judas and his brethren;

Matthew 1:20: (KJV) *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is **conceived <1080>** in her is of the Holy Ghost (Spirit).*

Philemon 1:10: (KJV) *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have **begotten <1080>** in my bonds:*



The following examples translate this word in the feminine sense of giving birth:

Luke 1:13: (KJV) *But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall **bear <1080>** thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.*

Matthew 2:1: (KJV) *Now when Jesus was **born <1080>** in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,*

2 Timothy 2:23: (NASB) *But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce <1080> quarrels.*



The Greek word for **procreate** has two distinct shades of meaning. One relating to the **BEGGETTING** of a life by a father and the other relating to **BIRTH** of a life by a mother.

This simple foundation tells us to be careful about how we interpret things.

How do we know which shade of meaning Jesus was referring to? Does it even make a difference?

Here is where we need to carefully observe the context of this use of the word for *born* and *begotten*.

 **BEGOTTEN (masculine)**
life in a basic and formative stage

 **BORN (feminine)**
life that is complete in its makeup and unalterable

To firmly establish context, we need to understand the word *again* which follows *born*:

John 3:3: (NASB) *Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born <1080> again <509> he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

Again: Strong's #509 from #507 *anōthen*; from above; by analogy, from the first; by implication, anew

The King James Version translates this word: from above, again, from the beginning (very first), the top

The primary definition does not imply “a repeat” or “once more.” How do we know what it means in John 3:3? Let’s see how the author uses the same word in other places.

In the same chapter of John, Jesus speaks again but in a different context:

John 3:31: (KJV) *He that cometh from above <509> is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.*

It is clear from the context this word <509> does not mean “again.” It means “higher.”



This word is used twice more in the book of John. This helps us see how the author uses it:

John 19:11: (KJV) *Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from **above <509>**: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

In context, this is about the Jewish leaders and the Sanhedrin versus Pilate and Rome. Both sides were responsible for the crucifixion, but Jesus is saying the ones who turned him over to Pilate had more culpability. Here the word *above* means “from a higher place,” “a higher rank.”

John 19:23: (KJV) *Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the **top <509>** throughout.*

The contextual definition of **<509>** in the book of John means “from above.”



We believe the word *again* in John 3:3 should be properly translated “from above” and not “again.”

What about outside the book of John?

This next use of **<509> sounds like our expression “take it from the top:”**

Luke 1:3: (KJV) *It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very **first <509>**, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,*

Here is the only other time this word is translated *again*, but there is a caveat:

Galatians 4:9: (KJV) *But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye *again* to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire **again <3825> <509>** to be in bondage?*

The word *again* here is from TWO different Greek words put together. The other word, **<3825>**, has the meaning of “repetition.”

We can see this easily in the New American Standard translation instead of the King James Version:

Galatians 4:9: (NASB) *But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved **all over <509> again <3825>**?*

Why is this such a big deal? Because Jesus told Nicodemus something profound. When we look at the Greek words and the context, we see the common translation of this teaching about spirituality is misunderstood.

1 FIRST CONCLUSION *Again in John 3:3,7 means “from above.”*

Many translations verify this:

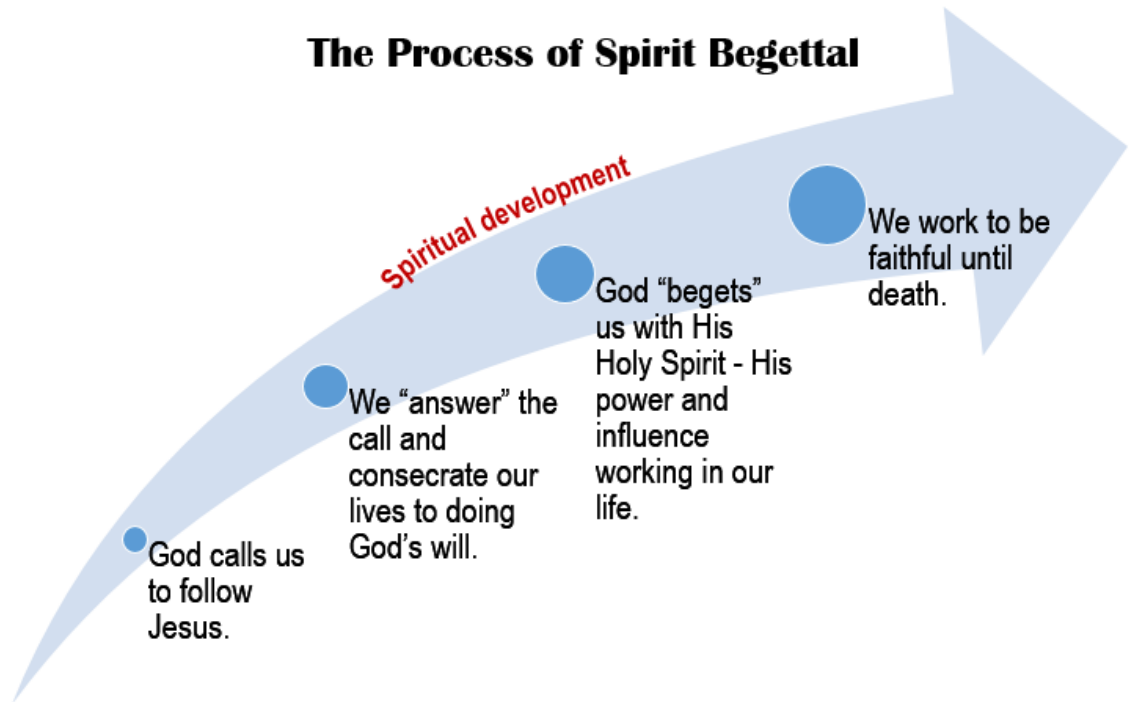
John 3:3,7: (Youngs Literal Translation) *³Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily, I say to thee, If any one may not be born from **above <509>**, he is not able to see the reign of God; ⁷thou mayest not wonder that I said to thee, It behoveth you to be born from **above <509>**;*

Whatever is happening is “coming down from heaven.”

2 SECOND CONCLUSION

Because the *birth/begettal* comes from above, we have no choice but to understand <1080> *gennao* as meaning begetting, not birth, as God is portrayed as masculine.

The Process of Spirit Begettal



Looking at the development process of human life, the begetting start of life looks much different than the end result. This is similar to our spiritual development. It starts in earnest with the receiving of the Holy Spirit, which guides our lives to do God's will to the best of our ability. If faithful, we develop into the reflection of what humanity is supposed to be.



The correct meaning of these verses is that Jesus is talking about being **BEGOTTEN FROM ABOVE**, which is very different than being **BORN AGAIN**.

Here is the profound lesson John 3:3 is teaching:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **BEGOTTEN FROM ABOVE** he cannot see the kingdom of God.



**With this clarity of definitions in hand, our next question is;
what was Jesus teaching Nicodemus?**

As usual, Jesus had a very specific agenda in mind as he spoke with Nicodemus. He knew Nicodemus was a learned Pharisee, and his coming by night was both a show of courage and some fear. Nicodemus wanted to know about Jesus, and Jesus would not disappoint him.

John 3:3-4: (NASB) ³*Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again (begotten from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?*

Even though Jesus is showing Nicodemus the higher way of a spirit-begotten life, Nicodemus is not perceiving the lesson and is focused on the earthly process of begetting and birth.

A promise and preview of this higher way:

Mark 4:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰*As soon as he was alone, his followers, along with the twelve, began asking him about the parables. ¹¹And he was saying to them, To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables, ¹²so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven (quoting from Isaiah 6:9).*

*To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God - the kingdom of God refers to two parts: the heavenly part where the called-out ones following Jesus go to, and the earthly part Jesus taught us to pray for (Matthew 6:10: (KJV) *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*)*

This passage in Mark is referring to the heavenly part of the kingdom.

For more on the topic of the kingdom, please search our archives for [Ep. 1030: Where is the Kingdom Jesus Told Us to Pray For?](#)

Here is what Spirit-begetting looks like:

2 Corinthians 5:17-18: (NASB) ¹⁷*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

Some Christians use these texts to point to a “regeneration.” Please see the **Bonus Material** for more detail.

Because Nicodemus was clearly not getting it, Jesus now simplifies this profound lesson:

John 3:5: (NASB) *Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born (begotten) of water and the spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*

- water
- spirit

Jesus is now speaking in words that Nicodemus the Pharisee should recognize. Interestingly, Nicodemus seems to miss this as well (we see later in verse 9), but we will get to that in a bit.

Jesus is quoting from a prophecy in Ezekiel about Israel's regathering.



We are seeing its fulfillment in process in our day:

Ezekiel 36:24-28: (NASB) *²⁴For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.*

This regathering started in 1878 with the first Jewish settlement, Petah Tikvah, meaning "Door of Hope." Israel became a nation in 1948.

²⁵Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

- water
- spirit

²⁸ You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.

God's Spirit being in the land of the nation of Israel is different than the begetting of the Spirit to the *new creation* (the called-out followers of Jesus). The *new creation* is through Jesus and promised a heavenly reward. Ezekiel describes the earthly rewards that come through God's promises (made possible by Jesus' sacrifice.)

Jesus is alluding to this wonderful promise of regathering, care and immense blessing. He is showing Nicodemus something he knows about as an example of living in God's blessings.

Jesus then says:

John 3:6: (NASB) *That which is born (begotten) of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born (begotten) of the Spirit is spirit.*

Jesus used the example of the physical "begettal" of natural Israel as an example of spiritual things. He used pictures with which Nicodemus would be familiar, meaning: Look at the importance of cleansing the people and the presence of God with them. Now think of it in terms of something higher, from above. I am teaching you about a spiritual version of godliness, not an earthly one.



Jesus describes what being *begotten by God's Spirit* looks like. He describes a

SPIRIT-BEGOTTEN JUSTIFIED LIFE

in comparison to Israel's spirit-led earthly nation.



For more on the spiritual walk of the Christian AS WELL AS the process of reconciliation to God for everyone else, please search our archives for Episodes [1108](#) and [1109](#): What Three Steps Will Get Us to Heaven? (Parts I and II).

This is profound. Jesus is teaching ALL of us what the amazing privilege of having God's Spirit brings us.

If we are just “begotten” and not “born” of the Spirit, what about going “here and there like the wind” in John 3:8?

The next few verses can be confusing, as they seem to present something mysterious. The most important thing to remember here is to stick to the guidelines these Scripture texts have already laid out for us. In these next verses, Jesus will build on the foundation he has already set.

Jesus has just defined earthly and spiritual natures as distinct. To enter the kingdom of God during the call of the gospel, one must be *begotten from above*.

For more on the topic of natures distinct, please search our archives for [Ep. 1110: Do People Turn Into Angels When They Die?](#)



Check out our CQ Kids Video: [What is the Holy Spirit?](#)

A new life must start through the washing of baptism, the remission of sins and the receiving of God's Spirit:

John 3:7: (NASB) *Do not be amazed that I said to you, You must be born (begotten) again (from above). (Also see Acts 22:16.)*

This helps us see the distinction between natures:

1 Corinthians 15:49-50: (NASB) ⁴⁹*Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we will also bear the image of the heavenly.* ⁵⁰*Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.*

We are begotten of the Spirit, meaning we are beginning our spiritual life.

John 3:8: (NASB) *The **wind <4151> blows <4154>** where it **wishes <2309>** and you hear the **sound <5456>** of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born (begotten) of the **Spirit <4151>**.*

Because Jesus has been consistently talking about God's Spirit, we see this verse as speaking of how that Spirit works, rather than talking about the actual wind.

Rotherham is one of many translations that bears this out:

John 3:8: (Rotherham) *The spirit, where it pleaseth, doth breathe, and, the sound thereof, thou hearest; but knowest not, whence it cometh and whither it goeth: Thus, is every one who hath been born (begotten) of the spirit.*

Wind/ Spirit: Strong's #4151 *pneuma*; from 4154; a current of air that is breath (blast) or a breeze

New American Standard translates this as: breath 3 times, spirit 342 times, spirits 32 times, spiritual once, wind once, winds once



Blows: Strong's #4154 *pneo*; to breathe hard, i.e. breeze

King James Version translates this as bloweth

Wishes: Strong's #2309 *thelo ethelo*; to determine

King James Version translates this as: will/would 159 times, will/would have 16 times, desire 13 times, desirous 3 times, list 3 times, to will 2 times, miscellaneous 4 times

Sound: Strong's #5456 *phone*; a tone (articulate, bestial or artificial); by implication, an address (for any purpose), saying or language

King James Version translates this as: noise, sound, voice

To paraphrase, we believe Jesus is saying God's influence is felt where it needs to be felt. It goes to work and the result is whatever God wants it to be. God is in control of it.

John 3:8: (NASB) The **wind <4151>** **blows <4154>** where it **wishes <2309>** and you hear the **sound <5456>** of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born (begotten) of the **Spirit <4151>**.

<4151> same word, different English translation.

We believe the word translated *wind* here should have been translated *Spirit*. God's Spirit breathes its influence where it will - you can discern, give heed to the effects of it, but we do not know where or who it will affect next. None of us can dictate what God's Spirit will do.

Thus, is every one who hath been born (begotten) of the spirit - meaning, we do not know who will be affected next.

Jesus has spent all this time confirming what Nicodemus initially said in John 3:2: *Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.* Jesus' reply is essentially: Let me explain to you how I do these things. I have been begotten from above, and those who follow me will be begotten from above. The begetting is from the Spirit of God. My Father's power is working through me.



How does the Spirit of God work once received?

Romans 8:26-27: (NASB) ²⁶*In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself (itself) intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷and he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*

God's power and influence is active in the lives of true Christians. It intercedes and helps us even when we do not know what to do. Jesus received the full measure of the Holy Spirit (John 3:34). As imperfect humans, his followers receive a portion of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8-11, Ephesians 4:7, Romans 12:6, 1 Peter 4:10).



Jesus is furthering his lesson
by teaching that the
POWER OF GOD'S INFLUENCE
is beyond our human comprehension
and yet is available to us
IF WE SUBMIT TO HIS WILL.

Jesus told a Pharisee things about God's Spirit that he did not tell anyone else.

**Begetting from above is by a God-driven influence.
How does Jesus wrap this up?**

Jesus gave Nicodemus, a faithful Pharisee, a glimpse of the things that would begin to happen after he was crucified, risen, and God's spirit was poured out at Pentecost. He described the coming call for "spiritual Israel" (Jesus' true followers) and compared it with the future earthly blessing of natural Israel. Jesus told him God's plan, but it was beyond Nicodemus' ability to understand.

BEGOTTEN FROM ABOVE

Being *born again* means to be *begotten from above*. It is the beginning of a new opportunity for life.

John 3:9-10: (NASB) ⁹Nicodemus said to him, *How can these things be?* ¹⁰Jesus answered and said to him, *Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?*

Nicodemus was overwhelmed. He did not understand familiar prophecy and the glimpse of spiritual things yet to come.

Jesus' next question is one which would test Nicodemus' authenticity in seeking out Jesus - *Are you the teacher of Israel and do not understand these things?* He was trying to elevate Nicodemus' thinking and help him understand the deep lessons Jesus was teaching him, including that Jesus came from God and used God's power to perform miracles.

At the beginning of this conversation, Nicodemus, a *ruler* and *teacher*, addressed Jesus as *Rabbi*.

Jesus, in turn, is challenging Nicodemus' own standing, knowing the pitfalls of honor and position:

Matthew 23:6-8: (NASB) ⁶*They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,* ⁷*and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.* ⁸*But do not be called Rabbi; for one is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.*

(Correction from the audio podcast: The word *rabbi* was used as an official term of honor, not indicating "father.")



Jesus is showing us the danger of power. In John 3:10 when Jesus calls Nicodemus a teacher, he is challenging him to not be caught up in power and to be humble enough to learn.

Nicodemus would be proven faithful. We hear of him twice more.

First, his faithfulness is shown in a quiet fashion in this event after Jesus was preaching about being the source of living water:

John 7:48-51: (NASB) ⁴⁸No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in him, has he? ⁴⁹But this crowd which does not know the Law is accursed. ⁵⁰Nicodemus (he who came to him before, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?

The Pharisees were not happy with Nicodemus. He asked them, “Shouldn’t we be abiding by our Law that does not judge someone before we hear from him?” Nicodemus stepped outside the pattern set by the Pharisees.

Later, he is outward in his faithfulness:

John 19:39-40: (NASB) ³⁹Nicodemus, who had first come to him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. ⁴⁰So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

Nicodemus wanted to wrap Jesus’ body appropriately for burial to honor his Lord. His humble heart came shining through. The other Pharisees were glad Jesus was dead.

Back to the story:

John 3:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony. ¹²If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Jesus answered Nicodemus in earthly terms about Jesus’ own present experience (and the disciples’ future experience) with the Spirit.

Jesus did not talk to Nicodemus about going to heaven (spiritual birth) because it would have been beyond his ability to comprehend:

Galatians 6:15: (NASB) *For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.*

If we have the begetting of the Holy Spirit at death, it leads to the spiritual birth of *a new creation*. Being Spirit-begotten now is the embryo stage of our spirit life. It must be nurtured and developed into a fully capable, mature spirit being. See also Colossians 1:27.

Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the beginning stage - being begotten from above, and not of true spiritual birth, meaning going to heaven as a faithful follower of Jesus.

This point was beyond Nicodemus’ ability to perceive at this point:

1 John 3:2: (NASB) *Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when he appears, we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is.*

Jesus told Nicodemus more than what he was capable of perceiving at that time. Tradition says Nicodemus later became a Christian. He could have been begotten from above and able to understand.



2 Corinthians 3:17-18: (Young's Literal Translation) ¹⁷*And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; ¹⁸and we all, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord beholding in a mirror, to the same image are being transformed, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Transformed, from glory to glory - humanity is the glory of the earth. We will be transformed from the glory of the human nature to the glory of the spiritual nature.

For more on the topic of glory, please search our archives for Ep. 1109: What Three Steps Will Get Us to Heaven? (Part II)



Jesus' emphatic teaching:
In **this life** we are **begotten**
by **God's Spirit** from above.
Spirit **BIRTH** is when we are
changed "**from glory to glory.**"

Jesus taught us a profound process for spirit birth. Are we really "born again"? Some day in the future, we hope, by the Lord's grace, we will be born again as a spirit being in heaven. But for now our journey begins as being "begotten from above."

*So, are Christians really born again?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



Join us next week for our podcast on February 3, 2020
Ep. 1111: Does the Apostle Paul Contradict Himself? (Part I)

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Bonus Material

Truth is like the sun. You can shut it out for a time, but it ain't goin' away. — Elvis Presley

What about regeneration? Is that not what being “born again” is all about?

Romans 6:4: (NASB) *Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.*

Is this newness actual regeneration? No.

Regeneration: Strong's #3824 *paliggenesia*; (spiritual) rebirth (the state or the act), i.e. (figuratively) spiritual renovation; specifically, Messianic restoration

This word is only used twice in the New Testament (below):

Matthew 19:27-28: (NASB) *²⁷Then Peter said to him, Behold, we have left everything and followed you; what then will there be for us? ²⁸And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you, that you who have followed me, in the **regeneration** <3824> when the Son of Man will sit on his glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

THE regeneration is clearly a future time when all of the faithful are in heaven with Jesus. If this is the case, then what is the newness about from the previous Romans text?

Titus 3:4-7: (NASB) *⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of **regeneration** <3824> and **renewing** <342> (renovation) by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

The newness is the privilege to be called to and prepared for the hope of a spiritual life based on grace, faith and the actions of discipleship.

Washed for the end purpose of THE regeneration:

⁷so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

As a surgeon washes in preparation before operating, this *washing of regeneration* is the preparation of our lives for our future heavenly work.

We also need our minds renovated to handle such work:

Romans 12:2: (NASB) *And do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the **renewing** <342> (renovation) of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

This work can only be completed when we have completed our transformation:

1 Corinthians 15:50, 53: (NASB) *⁵⁰Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵³For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

We are now children of God running to be chosen sons of God - thoroughly transformed and crystallized in character to live with Jesus:

1 John 3:2-3: (NASB) *²Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when he appears, we will be like him, because we will see him just as he is. ³And everyone who has this hope fixed on him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*



The following is an interesting excerpt from an article giving more context on Nicodemus:

(Source: <http://www.beitshalom.co.uk/files/Download/Born%20Again.pdf>)
Born again: A Jewish Concept (Beit Shalom Ministries) It appears in point of fact that Nicodemus is not a typical Jewish name, we must therefore assume that he is a descendant of the Hellenists left behind by Alexander the Great that has taken on the Pharisaic teachings. This therefore is the reason that Yeshua in verse 10 asks, "Art thou a master of Israel and knowest not these things?" Yeshua continues to say "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" Just what had Yeshua said that Nicodemus, as a ruler of Israel ought to have known? The answer is this: In his discourse about water and the Spirit, Yeshua as the consummate of all Pharisees was quoting Ezekiel 36:25-27. In which Ezekiel prophesies a time in the life of Israel when God will cleanse the heart, take away their filthiness and idolatry, and give them a new heart and a new spirit, and cause them to walk and keep his statutes and judgements. The metaphors used by Yeshua are the same as those used by the prophet Ezekiel, talking about water, the Spirit and the ability to walk in the Spirit of Yahweh. This should have been realized by Nicodemus as a teacher of the people.

Here are several other translations of John 3:3-8 that come closer to the actual meanings of the words:

John 3:3-8: (New Jerusalem Bible) ³Jesus answered: In all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above. ⁴Nicodemus said, How can anyone who is already old be born? Is it possible to go back into the womb again and be born? ⁵Jesus replied: In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born through water and the Spirit; ⁶what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above. ⁸The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

John 3:3-8: (A Conservative Version) ³Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to thee, If any man is not begotten from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus says to him, How can a man be begotten, being old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's belly, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to thee, If any man is not begotten from water and Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is begotten from the flesh is flesh, and that which is begotten from the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said to thee, ye must be begotten from above. ⁸The wind blows where it will, and thou hear the sound of it, but know not from where it comes, and where it goes. So is every man who is begotten from the Spirit.

John 3:3-8: (Diaglott) ³Answered the Jesus and said to him: Indeed indeed I say to thee, if not any one may be born from above, not is able to see the kingdom of the God. ⁴Says to him the Nicodemus: How is able a man to be born old being? not is able into the womb of the mother of himself a second time to enter, and to be born? ⁵Answered Jesus: Indeed indeed I say to thee, if not any one may be born out of water and spirit, not is able to enter into the kingdom of the God. ⁶That having been born out of the flesh, flesh is; and that having been born out of the spirit, a spirit is. ⁷Not thou mayest wonder, that I said to thee: Must you to be born from above. ⁸The spirit where it wills breathes; and the sound of it thou hearest, but not thou knowest, whence it comes, and where it goes; thus is every one the having been born out of the spirit.

John 3:3-8: (Rotherham) ³Jesus answered, and said unto him--Verily, verily, I say unto thee: Except one be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. ⁴Nicodemus saith unto him--How, can a man be born, when he is, old? Can he, into the womb of his mother, a second time, enter, and be born? ⁵Jesus answered--Verily, verily, I say unto thee: Except one be born of water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁶That which hath been born of the flesh is, flesh, and, that which hath been born of the spirit, is, spirit. ⁷Do not marvel, that I said unto thee: Ye must needs be born from above. ⁸The spirit, where it pleaseth, doth breathe, and, the



sound thereof, thou hearest; but knowest not, whence it cometh and whither it goeth: Thus, is everyone who hath been born of the spirit.

John 3:3-8: (Concordant New Testament) ³*Jesus answered and said to him, Verily, verily, I am saying to you, If anyone should not be begotten anew, he cannot perceive the kingdom of God.* ⁴*Nicodemus is saying to him, How can a man, being a veteran, be begotten? He cannot be entering into the womb of his mother a second time and be begotten!* ⁵*Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I am saying to you, If anyone should not be begotten of water and of spirit, he can not be entering into the kingdom of God.* ⁶*That which is begotten by the flesh is flesh, and that which is begotten by the spirit is spirit.* ⁷*You should not be marveling that I said to you, You must be begotten anew.* ⁸*The blast is blowing where it wills, and the sound of it you are hearing, but you are not aware whence it is coming and where it is going. Thus is everyone who is begotten by the water and the spirit.*

