

“11 Bible Verses About Being Born Again”

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"You must be born again" - Jesus speaking with Nicodemus - John 3:7 - Shutterstock image - Used under license

This lesson presents 11 Bible verses about being "born again" (and "born of God") and their meaning.

These "11 Bible Verses About Being Born Again" are a companion to the lesson, "You Must Be Born Again - John 3:7 Meaning" (Ref. 1).

The Bible quotations on this page are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV) on the BibleGateway site unless noted otherwise (Ref. 2).

Bible Verses about Being Born Again

John 1:12-13

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13)

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Referring to Jesus, the Son of God and the Word who became flesh (Luke 1:35; John 1:1, 14), our spiritual birth occurs when we "receive" [*lambanó*] him and "believe" [*pisteuó*] in his name (Ref. 3, Ref. 4, John 1:12). The Greek word for "receive" means *to receive what is offered with an open hand (accept)* (Ref. 3). The Greek word for "believe" means *to trust and to have faith* (Ref. 4). John 1:13 distinguishes between our natural human birth which comes from our human parents and the spiritual rebirth which comes from God, our heavenly parent, when we receive and believe in Jesus.

John 3:3

Nicodemus, a teacher of Israel (John 3:10), came to Jesus at night (John 3:1-2). Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (John 3:2). Jesus answered him,

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

Throughout the New Testament, the word "born" in Greek has three meanings" (Ref. 5):

- 1) *to procreate* (role of a father - for example, Matthew 1:2),
- 2) *to conceive* (role of a mother - for example, Matthew 1:20), and
- 3) *to regenerate* (which means *to make spiritually reborn* - Ref. 6) (role of the Holy Spirit). This meaning for "born" applies in John 1:13; John 3:3; John 3:5-8; and 1 John 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 5:4.

Throughout the New Testament, the word "again" in Greek also has three meanings (Ref. 7):

- 1) *from above* (John 19:11, James 1:17)
- 2) *from the beginning* (Luke 1:3 NIV)
- 3) *anew, over again* (John 3:3, 7). In John 3:3, most of the English-language Bible translations say "born again" or "born anew" instead of "born from above" (Ref. 8).

Putting these definitions together, in John 3:3 and John 3:7 the words "born again" mean *regenerated anew*. The work of making us born again [*regenerated anew*] is done by God (John 1:13, Titus 3:5).

John 3:5

"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" (John 3:5)

In the Old Testament, in the book of Ezekiel, God said, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules" (Ezekiel 36:25-27). God's actions of cleansing us from sin and putting God's Spirit within us go together. Jesus certainly knew this passage in Ezekiel, and may have been referring to it when he told Nicodemus that one needed to be born of water and the Spirit.

God's action of cleansing us from our sin and putting the Holy Spirit inside us results in us becoming born again (born of God) (Ezekiel 36:25-27, John 1:12-13, John 3:3).

John 3:7

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'" (John 3:7)

Who must be born again

The first "you" in John 3:7 is singular (Ref. 9), and is addressed to Nicodemus. "Do not marvel that I said to you..."

The second "You" in John 3:7 is plural ["*You all*" - Ref. 9]. With this "plural you," Nicodemus may have thought that Jesus was addressing Nicodemus and his colleagues - the Pharisees and rulers (John 3:1). However, this plural you is universal, and Jesus is telling us that all people (men, women, and children) need to be born again. The next section explains why.

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Why we must be born again

The Apostle Paul explains that the problem goes all the way back to Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:16-17, 3:6). "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). That is why Jesus said, "You (plural) must be born again" (John 3:7). There are no exemptions.

Titus 3:5

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:4-5)

The washing of regeneration

Titus 3:5 tells us that God has saved us (redeemed sinners - Titus 2:14) according to his mercy by the "washing of regeneration" and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. "Washing" literally means *bathing* and refers to the cleansing (purification) from sin that God does in us when we believe in his Son (Ref. 10, Ezekiel 36:25). In Titus 3:5, "regeneration" in Greek is a compound word and means *spiritual rebirth* (Ref. 11). By putting those words together, we see that the "washing of regeneration" and "renewal" [*supernatural re-creation*] is done by God and describes the divine work that the Holy Spirit does on our inside -- cleansing us from sin and making us "born again" (John 3:3, 7; Ref. 12).

1 Peter 1:3

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3)

Note that being born the first time refers to our human birth (John 1:12-13, John 3:3). Here in 1 Peter 1:3, the scripture tells us that God, according to his great mercy, has "caused us to be born again" [literally, *begotten us*

again] (Ref. 13). As the result of the new divine life that God has given us, we have hope. We look forward to blessings from God in this life and to eternal blessedness in the next life (Ref. 14 below).

1 Peter 1:22-23

"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, 23 since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." (1 Peter 1:22-23)

We are made born again not of perishable (human) seed, but by becoming born of God (John 1:12-13). Becoming born of God is through an instrument that does not perish - the living and abiding [*enduring*] word of God (Ref. 15). "It is the uniform doctrine of the Scriptures that divine truth is made the instrument of quickening the soul into spiritual life" (Ref. 16, James 1:18, Ephesians 1:13).

1 John 3:9, 4:7, 5:1, 5:4

Characteristics of someone who is born of God (born again):

a. Does not (habitually) practice sin

"No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God." (1 John 3:9)

b. Loves others with Christ-like love and loves God

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God." (1 John 4:7, Ref. 17)

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c. Believes that Jesus is the Christ

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him."
(1 John 5:1)

The Greek word for Christ, *Christos*, means Anointed One, The Messiah (Ref. 18).

d. Overcomes the world through faith in Jesus Christ

"For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith." (1 John 5:4)

Related Lessons

"You Must Be Born Again - John 3:7 Meaning"

"Becoming a Child of God" - John 1:12-13

References

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