

a second time naturally?" Jesus replied, "One must be begotten, not only naturally, but also spiritually, since that which is born naturally ("of the flesh") is flesh (i.e., natural), whereas that which is born spiritually ("of the Spirit") is spirit (i.e., spiritual)" This proposed interpretation unifies the passage and seems to make the best sense of this remarkable conversation.

(Incidentally, this is the classic passage in scripture on the new birth.)

4. I Peter 1:23 -- "Having been begotten again (ἀναγεγεννημένοι) not of perishable seed but imperishable, through the living and remaining Word of God." This tells us that the Word of God is used as a means to accomplish the new birth."

5. 1 John 3:1-2 -- "Behold, what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God (τέκνα θεοῦ); and we are! Because of this the world is not knowing us because it did not know Him. Beloved ones, now are we children of God (τέκνα θεοῦ), and it has not yet been manifested what we shall be. We know that if he should be manifested we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." Notice the present relevance of a past event: because we have been begotten of God, we are now children of God!

6. I John 3:9-10 -- "Everyone having been begotten of God (γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) is not practicing sin, because His seed is remaining in Him; and he is not able to be practicing sin, because he has been begotten of God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται). By this are manifest the children of God (τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ) and the children of the devil; everyone who is not practicing righteousness is not of God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ), neither the one who is not loving his brother." Notice that John says two things: first, the begotten one does not practice sin; second, the begotten one is not able to be practicing sin. The second assertion is much stronger than the first! The clause, "His seed is remaining in Him" may be understood as teaching that God's seed (the new principle of righteousness) is remaining in the begotten one, or that God's seed (the begotten one) continues in union with Him. The above translation favors the latter understanding.

7. I John 4:7 -- "Beloved ones, let us be loving one another, because love is of God, and everyone who is loving has been begotten of God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται) and is knowing God." Note that the one who has been begotten of God is marked by love to those who also have been begotten of God.

8. I John 5:1 -- "Everyone who is believing that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται), and everyone who is loving the one who begot is also loving the one having been begotten of Him (τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ)." Here we find two criteria by which the child of God may be identified: the true child of God believes in Jesus as the predicted Messiah, and the true child of God not only loves God, but also loves all other true children of God.

9. I John 5:4-5 -- "For everyone having been begotten of God (γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) is getting the victory over the world, and this is the victory which gets victory over the world, our