

That You May Have Life In His Name

John 3:1–15

Pastor Matt Dean

What does it mean to have life in His name?

3 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “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.”

- Nicodemus - The Pharisee
 - Zealous to obey the law of God
 - Laws on top of laws in order to obey the 613 laws
 - Respected leader / authority / voice / Sanhedrin
 - Approaches at night — Rabbi (respect) WE know

3 Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” 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. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Ezekiel 36:26–27 (ESV): 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.

One theme for Ezekiel would be that the people of God were in need of both cleansing and resurrection by God’s power — this was his vision of dry bones brought to life in the valley. Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus who would well know the need for cleansing by water...

2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV): 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

9 Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” 10 Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? 11 Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up...

Numbers 21:4–9 (ESV): The Bronze Serpent

4 From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.” 6 Then the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. 7 And the people came to Moses and said, “We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you. Pray to the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us.” So Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

Why the story of Moses and a bronze serpent?

- *The people became impatient*
- *The people spoke against God and spoke against Moses*
- *Have you brought us here to die? We loathe what You have provided*
 - *The response to Moses prayer after the people face consequences*
 - *Look at the bronze serpent lifted up and you will live*
 - *Notice — the people still get bitten, but they live on God’s terms and by his mercy and power.*
 - *How does this connect?*
 - *God has extended life in a broken world, and has done so on his terms, for his glory in the person of Jesus Christ. We look to Jesus.*

John 3:15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

John 6:38–40 (ESV): 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

What does it mean to be born again, to be a new creation?

What changes? Who does what?

Heart of stone removed - heart for God with knowledge of God replaced

What has been made new?

RC Sproul describes the state of man and how God works in our lives... *“A person must be changed by God... the disposition of his heart which by nature (because of sin) does not want to do God’s bidding, must be altered by God and the Holy Spirit. Man’s natural tendency is to flee from the presence of God and to have no affection for the biblical Christ. Therefore, if you have in your heart today any affection for Christ at all, it is because God the Holy Spirit in His sweetness, in His power, in His mercy, and in His grace has been to the cemetery of your soul and has raised you from the dead. So now you ARE alive to the things of Christ and you rejoice in the kingdom into which He has brought you.”*

What does it mean to be born again?

- *New place of belonging with God.*
 - *Colossians 1:13–14 (ESV): 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*
- *New Life (spiritually dead, now alive)*
 - *Romans 6:9–11 (ESV): 9 We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. 10 For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. 11 So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.*
- *New purpose (chief end of man to glorify God)*
 - *Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV): 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*
- *New power and new identity (the Holy Spirit has regenerated us and lives in us) to convict and convince*
 - *Romans 8:10–16 (ESV): But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brothers, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God*

What does it mean to have life in His name?

- *Recognize that to be born again is a work of God’s Spirit in us*
- *To be born again is comes with corresponding faith in and love for Jesus.*