

Lesson V.

JESUS THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD

February 2, 1908

BETWEEN THE LESSONS—The Passover celebration extended over seven days. During this period, after the cleansing of the temple and the discussion with the Jewish authorities (see last Lesson, ch. 2 : 13-22), Jesus turned to the multitudes, to carry on amongst them His work of teaching and healing (see v. 23). At this time He wrought a number of miracles, although none of these are recorded (compare chs. 3 : 2 ; 4 : 45, 20 : 30). Many of those who witnessed the miracles were so impressed, that, for a time, they believed on Him as the Messiah. But their faith lacked depth and sincerity, and hence Jesus did not trust Himself to them, or open to them His heart.

GOLDEN TEXT—For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—John 3 : 16.

Memorize vs. 14-16. **THE LESSON PASSAGE**—John 3 : 14-21. Study John 3 : 1-21.

14 And as Mo'ses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up :

15 That whosoever believeth ¹ in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth ² in him should not perish, but have ³ everlasting life.

17 For God sent not ⁴ his Son into the world to ⁵ condemn the world ; but that the world ⁶ through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not ⁷ condemned : ⁸ but he that believeth not ⁹ is condemned already,

Revised Version—¹ may in him have eternal life ; ² on ; ³ eternal ; ⁴ the ; ⁵ judge ; ⁶ should be saved through him ; ⁷ judged ; ⁸ *Omit* but ; ⁹ hath been judged ; ¹⁰ judgment, that the ; ¹¹ the light ; for their works ; ¹² ill ; ¹³ and cometh not ; ¹⁴ works ; ¹⁵ have been.

Daily Readings—(Courtesy, I.B.R.A.)—M.—Jesus, the Saviour of the world, John 3 : 1-21. T.—Born of God, 1 John 5 : 1-13. W.—A new creature, 2 Cor. 5 : 14-21. Th.—Flesh and spirit, Rom. 8 : 1-10. F.—The brazen serpent, Num. 21 : 4-9. S.—The Gift of love, 1 John 4 : 4-14. S.—Great love, Rom. 8 : 31-39.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Among those who had been deeply impressed by the teachings and miracles of Jesus, was "Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews", that is, a member of the Sanhedrin, the great Jewish Council. He came to Jesus (see vs. 1-13), to learn more as to who He was and what were His teachings. He chose the night for his visit, probably for fear of his fellow Sanhedrists, who were opposed to Jesus. Jesus tells His visitor that no man can become a member of the kingdom of God, unless he is born again, that is, receives a new divine life. This life from above is the one greatest need of all mankind. To supply it, Jesus Himself came down from heaven to earth.



JESUS AND NICODEMUS

I. A UNIVERSAL PROVISION.—14. As Moses lifted up the serpent; elevating it upon a pole, so that it could be seen from all parts of the camp by every Israelite bitten by the poisonous desert serpents (see Num. 21 : 6-9). **Must.** Only in this way could men be saved from sin ; and to save men was Jesus' chief desire. **The Son of man be lifted up ;** that is, on the cross, that He might make the love of God fully known, and draw men to Himself, ch. 12 : 32, 33.

II. A UNIVERSAL OFFER.—15-17. **Whosoever believeth ;** looks to the Saviour with trust and confidence, as the poisoned Israelites looked to the

brazen serpent. **May in him have eternal life** (Rev. Ver.). The fountain of life is in Christ ; its streams flow to all believers. **God so loved the world ;** the whole human race, not the chosen people of Israel only, as the Jews, for the most part, believed. **That he gave.** The measure of God's love is the gift of the Son. **Only begotten Son ;** the Son of God in a sense true of no other, and from whom all others obtain their right to become sons of God, ch. 1 : 12. **Whosoever believeth ;** repeated from v. 15, to emphasize the truth that the gospel is for all. **Should not perish ;** suffer the loss of all that is good in life, both in this world and in the world

to come. "Perish" must point to some very terrible fate, else so great a price had not been paid to save men from it. **Have eternal life** (Rev. Ver.) ; a life of blessedness, begun here and made perfect in eternity.

III. A UNIVERSAL REQUIREMENT.—18-21. **For God sent not the Son . . . to judge** (Rev. Ver.). If He were to judge, there could be only one sentence : all are guilty before God, Rom. 3 : 10. **But . . . the world . . . be saved.** God's purpose is as wide as the race, and it is a purpose of salvation. **Believeth.** Faith is the channel by which pardon and life come to us. **Not judged** (Rev. Ver.). The