

Lesson V.

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

January 29, 1905

John 3 : 1-15. Commit to memory vs. 14, 15. Read John 2 : 12 to 3 : 21.

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 : 16.¹ There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:² The same came ² to Je'sus by night, and said unto him, Rab'bi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these ³ miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.³ Je'sus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born ⁴ again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.⁴ Nicode'mus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter ⁵ the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?⁵ Je'sus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and ⁶ of the Spirit, he cannot enter into 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 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born ⁸ again.⁸ The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou**Revised Version**—¹ Now; ² unto him; ³ signs; ⁴ anew; ⁵ a; ⁶ Omit of; ⁷ voice; ⁸ knowest not; ⁹ the teacher; ¹⁰ understandest not; ¹¹ bear witness of; ¹² Omit have; ¹³ into; ¹⁴ descended out of; ¹⁵ may in him have eternal life.hearest the ⁷ sound thereof, but ⁸ canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.⁹ Nicode'mus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?¹⁰ Je'sus answered and said unto him, Art thou ⁹ a master of Is'rael, and ¹⁰ knowest not these things?¹¹ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and ¹¹ testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.¹² If I ¹² have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you ⁶ of heavenly things?¹³ And no man hath ascended ¹³ up to heaven, but he that ¹⁴ came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.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 ¹⁵ in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED

Time and Place—April, 27 A.D.; Jerusalem.**Connection**—A brief sojourn at Capernaum (ch. 2 : 12); then a journey to the Passover Feast at Jerusalem (v. 13); the cleansing of the temple (vs.companion of Joseph in laying His body in the sepulchre, ch. 19 : 39-42. **A ruler of the Jews**; a member of the Sanhedrin, or Great Court of Seventy, the highest governing body among the Jews. **Came to Jesus**; seeking instruction from the fountain-head, resolved to judge for himself. **By night**; now so timid, afterwards so courageous. **Rabbi**; the usual courtesy title for a teacher. Nicodemus saw in Jesus a great Teacher, but not one different in kind—this was his mistake—from those who had gone before. **From God . . . these miracles**. The miracles, he felt, were not merely wonders, but were tokens of God's power in the Doer.**II. A GREAT REQUIREMENT.**—3-6. **Except a man be born anew** (Rev. Ver.). Nicodemus sought information; Jesus said he must have reformation, be made anew. **Cannot see the kingdom of God**; of which only the true children of God, whether Jews or Gentiles are citizens. **How can a man be born . . . old?** He speaks in blank amazement. He is sorely puzzled. **Born of water and of the Spirit**. Two things are required in order to enter into the kingdom of God: (1) putting away evil,—of this washing with water is a sign; (2) the love and practice of good,—for this the Spirit's power is needed. To belong to the kingdom of God, it is not enough for the Jews to be descended from Abraham (**born of the flesh**); they and all others must be **born of the Spirit**—receive a new nature from God.**7, 8. Ye (even the Pharisees) must be born again**. We come into the world with one nature; we need a new nature to become children of God. **The wind . . . the Spirit**. What makes the wind blow is a mystery, but we see its effects in the rustling of the leaves; how the Spirit works we cannot tell, but we see the result in a pure and good life.**9-13. How can these things be?** No question is too hard for Jesus. **A master (teacher) of Israel, and knowest not these things?** He might have

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14-17); the working of miracles, which caused many to believe (v. 23); are followed by our Lord's interview with Nicodemus.

I. A GREAT TEACHER.—1, 2. **A man of the Pharisees**; a Jewish sect, strict, zealous, and bigoted, but having many true patriots and noble men, as Gamaliel, Acts 5 : 34. **Nicodemus**; a Jew with a Greek name, afterwards the defender of Jesus against His enemies (ch. 7 : 50, 51); and the