

The Story of Jesus
(Lesson 35)

Introduction:

1. We are to give careful attention to growing in the knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18).
2. Searching the Scriptures is the key to accomplishing this growth (John 5:39).
3. As Jesus taught and preached He revealed His will on many important subjects.
4. In this lesson we are studying His teaching on "the new birth" (John 3:1-7).

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1-2) JESUS WAS APPROACHED BY A MAN NAMED NICODEMUS
 - A. In vs.1 Nicodemus is identified as:
 1. a Pharisee (several of their major beliefs are mentioned in Acts 23:8)
 2. "*a ruler of the Jews*" (he later spoke up on behalf of Jesus -- John 7:50-51).
 - B. According to vs.2, when Nicodemus approached Jesus,:
 1. he did so by night
 2. he showed respect for Jesus by calling Him "*Rabbi*"
 3. he recognized Jesus as a teacher from God because of the miracles He had performed (see John 2:23).
- II. (vs.3-7) JESUS TALKED TO NICODEMUS ABOUT BEING BORN AGAIN
 - A. It might seem odd to us that Jesus began immediately to talk to Nicodemus about the new birth, but we must remember that:
 1. Jesus had announced that the kingdom was "*at hand*" (Matthew 4:17)
 2. Jesus "*knew what was in man*" (John 2:24-25).
 - B. (vs.3) Jesus stated that a person must be born again in order to "*see the kingdom of God.*"
 1. To be a part of the Jewish kingdom, a person simply had to be born into a Jewish family.
 2. Jesus informed Nicodemus that another birth is required for entering God's kingdom.
 3. In addition to being a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus was "*a master of Israel*" (vs.10).
 4. If he needed to hear this information, we need to hear it as well.
 - C. (vs.4) Nicodemus was confused about the Lord's statement.
 1. He apparently thought that Jesus was talking about a second physical birth.
 2. A second physical birth would be impossible, especially if his mother was no longer living.
 3. (vs.6) Jesus showed that the new birth must not be confused with the physical birth.
 - D. (vs.5) Jesus explained the new birth to Nicodemus.
 1. The new birth consists of being born of water and the Spirit (not 2 births, but 1 birth consisting of 2 elements).
 2. (John 3:22) Other people understood what is involved in being born again.
 3. Additional passages which explain the new birth:
 - a. We learn from John 1:12-13 that we must be "born of God" to become His children.
 - b. See 1 Peter 1:22-23
 - 1) These statements were made to people who had been born again.
 - 2) They had been born again by the Word of God.
 - 3) When they were born again their souls were purified.
 - 4) This was accomplished when they obeyed the truth (see 3:21).
 - c. See Titus 3:3-7
 - 1) These verses do not specifically mention the new birth, but they do mention "*the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit*" (being born of water and the Spirit).
 - 2) The conduct of people before they are born again is described in vs.3.
 - 3) The new birth allows us to escape the punishment that this kind of conduct deserves.
 - 4) It is when we are born again that we are justified by God's grace.
 - E. (vs.7) Jesus told Nicodemus not to marvel because of His requirement to be born again.