

And one day he lied to his mother about where he was going, and the next morning his robe didn't seem quite as bright as it did before. He cheated on a test once - just one answer, honest! but the next day the designs on his sleeves seemed a little duller. And then he stole that biscuit from his little sister - the one she had been saving for after school - and a bit of jam spilled on the front of his robe, and there was another stain that wouldn't go away.

Still, he tried to keep his robe clean as best he could.

Not everyone did. Some didn't care how dirty or torn or tattered their robes got, as long as they were having fun. It didn't matter to them at all if they were ruining an incredible gift.

... continued next time

Jesus and Nicodemus

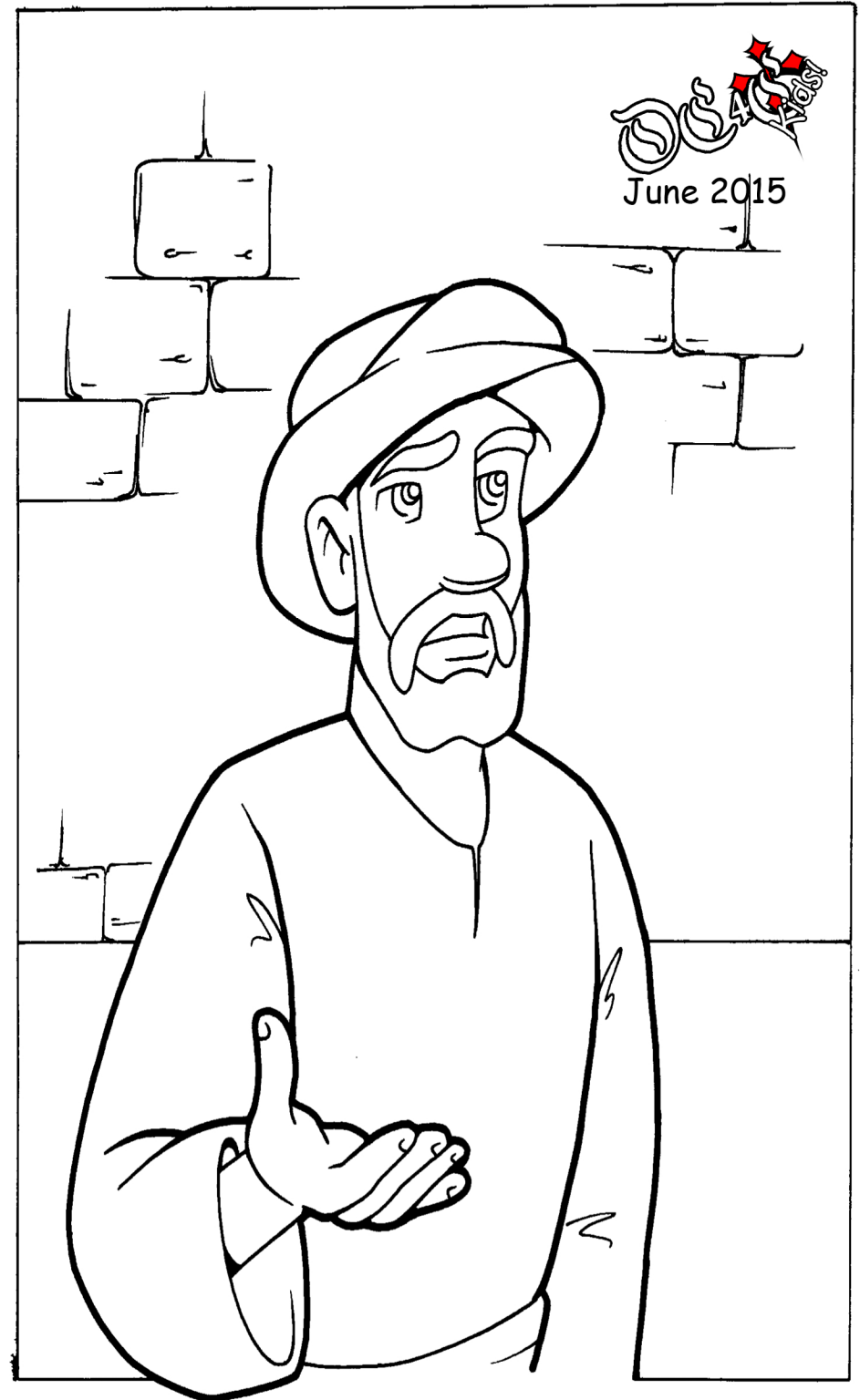
K I N G D O M L S A V E D B A
 R F Y U D T N I C O D E M U S
 A Y T D R E G J U B V P M D V
 B O L U I B N P H A R I S E E
 B E T N T S S M G N A Z Z K K
 I H W Q E J C T E H E F B B U
 T P U T P V N I C D I D I U O
 I K G N E H A I P X N B O Y Z
 R J H A L A D E A L T O Z G B
 I H B M J T C N H G E H C E A
 P S V F E J Q H I A A S G E M
 S E S O S Y U W E W S N F I Z
 I L U N U R M K V R G B R J L
 U F B O S D J M U U J K Z O B
 M F H S J C Q L L I F T E D B

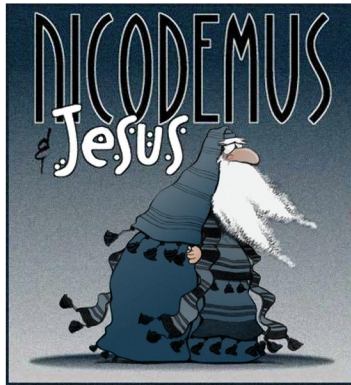
BORN AGAIN
 CONDEMNED
 DISCIPLES
 FLESH
 GOD

HEAVENLY
 JESUS
 KINGDOM
 LIFTED
 LIGHT

NICODEMUS
 PHARISEE
 RABBI
 SAVED
 SON OF MAN

SPIRIT
 TEACHER
 TRUTH
 WIND





By Paul Dallgas-Frey
Luke 3:1-8

A Story of Salvation



NICODEMUS CAME TO JESUS BY NIGHT.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee.

He was an important man. He was a teacher of the Jewish people, and he was supposed to know everything about the ways of God.

But he was afraid.

He was old now, his beard was long and gray, and in the deepest corner of his heart, he knew that there was one thing he didn't know. And so one night Nicodemus came to Jesus in secret and said,

"Teacher, what must I do to be saved?"

There was something about Jesus, something about the way he looked into your eyes that said, "I know."

"Unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God!" was all that Jesus said.

"But, Master, I am old! How can I be born again? Am I supposed to crawl back into mother's stomach and be born again? I don't think it will work!"

But Jesus smiled warmly. "I tell you, unless you are born of water and the spirit, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

Nicodemus left Jesus that night, still very much in the dark.



Now, this next part isn't in the Bible. But it could have happened something like this...

The old, tired, and very confused Nicodemus crawled into bed that night, saying over and over to himself, "Unless you are born again, you cannot enter the Kingdom of God... Unless you are born again..."

And then he had a dream.



He was a young boy again, and a package arrived at the door.

You know how exciting it is whenever a package arrives at the door - especially one you weren't expecting! This package was wrapped almost too wondrously to tear open. On it was a note on handmade paper, and written by hand in gold ink it said,

"To Nicodemus. Try not to get it dirty."

Well, Nicodemus TRIED to open the package carefully, but in the end, he couldn't help it. He tore it open.

Inside was the most beautiful robe he had ever seen.

It was dazzling white with brightly colored stripes at the bottom and the ends of the sleeves, in designs that seemed to have been hand stitched especially for him - amazing designs of all the things he really liked; lions and dragons and bowls of fresh figs with cheese.

It was a robe obviously made with incredible love.

He put it on right away. Everyone in his little town had gotten one, and that next day, they all looked so magnificent.

Of course, Nicodemus wore his everywhere.

He TRIED to keep it clean. He really did.

But then he got into a fight with his little brother one day, and got a grass stain on the knee that just wouldn't come out no matter how hard he tried to wash it.