



There was one of the Pharisees called Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews, who came to Jesus by night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you have come from God as a teacher; for no one could perform the signs that you do unless God were with him.' Jesus answered:

*In all truth I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.
Nicodemus said, 'How can anyone who is already old be born?
Is it possible to go back into the womb again and be born?' Jesus replied:
In all truth I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God
without being born through water and the Spirit;
what is born of human nature is human; what is born of the Spirit is spirit.
Do not be surprised when I say: You must be born from above.
The wind blows where it pleases;
you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going.
So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.
'How is that possible?' asked Nicodemus.
Jesus replied, 'You are the Teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things!
'In all truth I tell and witness only to what we have seen and yet you people reject our evidence.
If you do not believe me when I speak to you about earthly things,
how will you believe me when I speak to you about heavenly things?
No one has gone up to heaven except the one who came down from heaven, the Son of man;
as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up
so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.
For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.
For God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world,
but so that through him the world might be saved.*

John 3:1-17

The wind blows where it pleases

Monday before Lent

In unfolding his narrative, John first laid the groundwork, introducing the characters and establishing the perspective on Jesus that he sought to convey. Now he begins the rest of his gospel. His core message is captured in the words, *For this is how God loved the world: he gave his only Son....*

A way of translating John's concept into a framework we can grasp is to see it as a paradigm shift. Paradigm is the picture we have of reality. We all live the whole of our lives within such a paradigm, whatever that paradigm may be. Paradigm is the only way we have of knowing reality, so our paradigm governs the way we think and live. By its very nature, paradigm blinds us to any possibility that lies outside the paradigm; nor can we change our paradigm by any action of will or determination. Yet paradigms do shift, and when they shift the entire world of reality changes for us and we see things to which we were blind previously (while simultaneously becoming blind to things we used to be able to see). In effect, John's message in his dialogue is that it requires a paradigm shift, a complete change in our understanding of reality, for us to grasp the meaning of Jesus. Until this happens we are blind to the gospel.