

John 3:1-17^v

^v About the Gospel: John 3:1-17

Today's reading is taken from the first of John's lengthy expositions of Jesus' teachings. Two characteristic techniques are employed: the use of a question asked on the physical level and answered on the spiritual level, and the use of the questioner's misunderstanding.

Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, comes to Jesus because of his interest in Jesus' works. Jesus seeks to draw him past these outward manifestations to a recognition of their inward significance.

The meaning of being "born from above" begins their discussion. Nicodemus's misunderstanding centers around the word translated "from above," which, in Greek, has two meanings. The first is 'anew, again' on the physical level, which is what Nicodemus understands; the second is 'from above' spatially, which is what Jesus seems to intend.

Jesus contrasts the realm of the Spirit, which is eternal and heavenly, with the realm of the flesh, which is earthly, weak and mortal (but not necessarily sinful). Both flesh and spirit make up human life, but the Spirit is life itself. The Greek and Hebrew words for wind also mean 'spirit'.