



## The Gospel of John

### Nicodemus

A striking encounter by night evokes images of a painting by Carravaggio, with a dramatic contrast between darkness and light. Nicodemus, a respected Pharisaic elder, comes to Jesus, perhaps out of conviction, perhaps out of curiosity. He may evoke the stance of many of the Jewish interlocutors of the evangelist. In his dialogue with Jesus he encounters a mysterious answer to his curiosity. Jesus tells him that he must be “born again/from above” (the Greek word *anōthen* means both). Misunderstanding this utterance in the crudest, material form, a puzzled Nicodemus evokes further responses from Jesus that point the way in which heavenly “rebirth” occurs, by focusing with eyes that truly see on a sight that heals, the Son of Man “lifted up” like the serpent in the desert at the time of the Exodus. Through that experience, and perhaps through a ritual action (water and the spirit), a human life can be transformed, light can break into darkness.

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