

9.14

Nicodemus

Nicodemus (pronounced nik'uh-dee'muhs) was a Pharisee, a teacher of Israel, and a ruler of the Jews as described in the Gospel of John. Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night and engages him in conversation about the need to be born again (or “from above”), about God’s love for the world, and about Jesus’s own unique role as the Son of God (3:1–21). Nicodemus is later presented as defending Jesus, objecting that some of his fellow Pharisees are judging him without allowing him a fair hearing (7:50–52). After the crucifixion, he appears with Joseph of Arimathea, bringing a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes to wrap Jesus’s body in spices and prepare it for entombment (19:39). Mentioned only in the Fourth Gospel, Nicodemus seems to be presented in that Gospel as the personification of a learned Jewish constituency that might be well disposed toward Jesus but did not understand him adequately, or, at least, did not feel prepared to confess him publicly as the Christ.