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*Jesus in John's Gospel: Structure and Issues in Johannine
Christology* by William Loader (review)

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does not so much focus on the unicity of the resurrection against the Jewish matrix from which Easter faith emerged as appeal to the peculiarity of the NT writers' depiction of the risen body. A spiritual view of the afterlife would have been much easier to promote in dialogue with potential converts in the Greco-Roman world, but the early Christians never compromised about the risen body in their preaching. Though some contemporary exegetes may highlight the spiritual view in order to make the afterlife credible in the modern world, L. reminds us that the ancient world had the same trouble with accepting the bodily resurrection. Yet the early Christians proclaimed that Jesus was raised from the dead, not assumed or immortalized.

Third, L.'s chapter on faith, reason, and history outlines the Catholic perspectives of Joseph Fenton, Bernard Lonergan, and Pierre Rousselot. Although L. recognizes the indispensable role of reason in matters of defending the faith, he does not overstate the case for reason in the next chapter, which shows the need for contemplative engagement and love to pinpoint an answer to the truth concerning the risen Jesus. As a case in point, L. shows how Hans Urs von Balthasar's apologetics of love (see his *Love Alone Is Credible* [trans. D. C. Schindler; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004]) is congruent with historical approaches: "While I think von Balthasar's position is too quick to dismiss the contemplative work of reason unaided by faith, the strengths of his position should be evident. Lacking appreciation for divine self-surrendering love, we are unlikely to perceive the truth of Christ" (p. 182).

Finally, given the assumption that Jesus made himself seen to the disciples, skeptics, individuals, and even large groups of people under radically different circumstances (see 1 Cor 15:3-8), L. tries to explain why the resurrected Lord seems to remain hidden today. Here one may expect L. to engage with contemporary philosophical discussions on divine hiddenness. Instead he illustrates proper theological understandings for answering the challenge. Frequent public revelations could assimilate "him to our fallen demand for this worldly security based on pride and power" (p. 197). Instead, the purpose of the risen Jesus is to bring us to where he is now. The final public revelation is supposed to prompt believers to anticipate being with him in the next lifetime.

Did Jesus Rise from the Dead? contains a blend of history and theology for demonstrating the credibility of the resurrection. While some might balk at the use of theology in such an endeavor, this does not make the skeptic's case more honest or levelheaded in merely appealing to human reason. Presuppositions, including theological ones, are inevitable. For this reason, L. offers an up-to date and courageous case for the resurrection that should be consulted on a regular basis for years to come.

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WILLIAM LOADER, *Jesus in John's Gospel: Structure and Issues in Johannine Christology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017). Pp. x + 532. Paper \$45.

This monograph is a revised edition and an extensive reworking of the author's *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structure and Issues* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1989; 2nd

ed., 1992). William Loader first articulated his understanding of the central structure of Johannine christology in an article that appeared in 1984 ("The Central Structure of Johannine Christology," *NTS* 30 [1984] 188-216). The present volume is the result of the author's lifetime preoccupation with and research into the Fourth Gospel, specifically its christology. It is magisterial in both its scope and its depth.

The introduction presents a synthesis of Rudolf Bultmann's contribution to Johannine scholarship. While dismissing Bultmann's approach, which posits that the author employed but demythologized the gnostic myth of a revealer-redeemer sent by God, L. believes that Bultmann's fundamental question about the center of Johannine christology remains valid. The first part of the volume, therefore, traces and identifies the central structure of christology in John. The search for the central structure is ultimately a project of finding what integrates the different christological motifs and images and how they coalesce in the Gospel. If a center does exist in John, it will provide considerable heuristic value. The second part reviews some of the important theological themes in the Gospel such as preexistence, the unity of the Son with the Father, the salvific meaning of the death of Jesus, and the exaltation and glorification of Jesus, in light of the identified central structure.

The search for the basic thought structure and outline of christology begins with the examination of two major summaries in the Fourth Gospel, namely, John 3:31-36 and 12:44-50, along with 8:12-19, a passage that is typical of Jesus's encounter with the Jews. The common elements of the foundational christological structure discerned from these passages include the following: the Son comes from the Father, the Father has sent the Son, the Father has authorized the Son, the Son makes the Father known, Jesus as Son and God as Father (pp. 57-62). This underlying structure is verified against the prayer of Jesus in 17:1-26. Additionally, L. surveys the entire Gospel but seemingly divides it idiosyncratically into sections that do not follow the traditional delineation of the Gospel according to narrative flow, to show that the identified structure undergirds the christological thought of the whole Gospel. L. articulates the christological structure of the Gospel in this way: "The Father sends and authorizes the Son, who knows the Father, comes from the Father, makes the Father known, brings light and life and truth, completes his Father's work, returns to the Father, exalted, glorified, ascended, sends the disciples and sends the Spirit to enable greater understanding, to equip for mission, and to build up the community of faith" (p. 121).

The second part of the study examines the meaning of the death of Jesus and the question of the salvation event in John, two major issues in the scholarship. L. considers whether the death of Jesus can be understood as vicarious, sacrificial, or apotropaic. Without dismissing the possibilities or traces of each of these understandings of the death of Jesus, since the author may have utilized these traditions and held them together in presenting his christology, L. argues that they are either incidental or secondary to John's interpretation of the death of Jesus. Consistent with the central structure, the death of Jesus represents instead the culmination of the Son's accomplishment of his task to make the Father known in word and deed. Thus, the salvation event in John employs the envoy-revealer pattern, which assumes a cosmic dualism of heaven and earth, to portray the coming of the Son, the response to whom determines salvation or condemnation. Jesus as envoy and revealer of the Father offers not information but encounter and relationship. Everything else in the Gospel is in service of this point; for instance, the gift of the Spirit enables a fuller understanding of and access to the revelatory event of the Son as the Sent One from the Father.

L. shows that in this pattern of envoy-revealer communication, preexistence is used to affirm the authority of the Son to speak and act in order to offer a life-giving relationship with himself and the Father. The other issue discussed as it relates to the center is the nature of Jesus as the unique Son of the Father and as Jesus of Nazareth.

The book concludes with a masterful and commanding reflection on the composition of the Gospel, focusing on how the author understood the Jesus of history, the relationship between the Gospel's christology and its community, and the relevance of the Gospel and its christology today. L. observes that, although the pattern of the envoy-revealer Son who offers life dominates the Gospel, the integration of the other traditions is still incomplete. In other words, the christology in the Gospel represents "a Christology in development" (p. 436). The identified central christological structure in terms of the envoy Son who bears the Father's word of life to all has the simplicity that allows for holding the other christological motifs in a healthy tension. As a celebration and expression of faith, the Gospel is imprecise and ambiguous, but, "properly understood, it succeeds more than any other NT writing in identifying the heart of Christian faith, as life in relationship with the Son and the Father in communion of love, love sent out into the world" (p. 471).

Throughout the book, L. engages impressively with a wide range of recent Johannine scholarship, specifically with exegetical insights from the German and English-speaking worlds since Bultmann. Often striking a careful balance between scholarly positions, L. embraces tensions and is not dismissive of alternative positions and interpretative possibilities. Disagreements are noted, of course, but they are often assessed from the point of view of the identified central structure. Moreover, the book is structured such that it requires or prompts repetition and repeated explanations for recurring passages. In the end, one cannot help but admire the brilliant exegetical work and theological interpretation L. displays in this study. This work truly reflects a lifetime of judicious thinking about John's christology refined through conversation with many others. Future readers and scholars of the Fourth Gospel must consult this convincing and powerful synthesis of the central structure of Johannine christology.

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JOEL MARCUS, *John the Baptist in History and Theology* (Studies on Personalities of the New Testament; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2018). Pp. x + 278. \$59.99.

Disagreements and competition within communities of faith are ubiquitous in the history of religion. Those who lose such contests are often vilified by their adversaries and branded as heretics by subsequent generations. The winners, by contrast, are lauded as God's elect. On occasion, however, the custodians and architects of religious traditions have embarked on a different path. In these instances, former competitors are presented as allies, and the memories of those who fell short in their attempts to define the faith are offered as testimonials to the legitimacy of the victor(s). It is the latter approach, argues Joel Marcus