The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John

Edited by CRAIG R. KOESTER
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Preface

The resurrection of Jesus plays a central and yet disputed role in the narrative and theology of Johns gospel. At the time of his death Jesus says, "It is finished" (19:30), yet readers find that as a narrative the gospel is not finished but continues with accounts of the empty tomb and Jesus' appearances to his disciples. During his ministry Jesus calls himself "the resurrection and the life" (11:25–26) and says that those who believe in him have true life now (5:24), yet he also speaks about the resurrection of believers on the last day (5:25–29; 6:39–40). In the Farewell Discourses Jesus says that he will see his disciples again, but it is not always clear whether this promise is fulfilled by the resurrection appearances or whether the gospel speaks of another encounter that is yet to come (14:18–19; 16:16–24). The importance of Jesus' resurrection seems clear, but how it fits into the overall perspective of the gospel continues to generate debate.

The essays in this collection take up key questions concerning the significance of Jesus' resurrection and its implications. Included are studies of the relationship of Jesus resurrection to his ministry of signs, his crucifixion, and the faith of later generations. The embodied quality of the resurrection and its importance for understanding Johannine eschatology and life within the Christian community is given special attention. Literary studies explore the interplay between the Farewell Discourses and the resurrection narratives, the problematic role of John 21 within the gospel as a whole, and the way the theme of recognition informs the interpretation of the gospels message. Careful attention is also given to the theme of Jesus' ascension and the commission to forgive and retain sins. Together, these essays give a rich sense of the many facets of Jesus resurrection and its importance for the study of Johns gospel. We hope that this volume will make a substantial contribution to the ongoing discussion of this central theme in Christian theology.

The idea for this series of studies originated in the "Johannine Writings Seminar" of the Society for New Testament Studies (SNTS). Some of essays were originally presented during the annual meetings of the society in Halle (2005), Aberdeen (2006), and Sibiu (2007), while others were written later specifically for this collection. The contribution of Sandra M. Schneiders was previously published in *Proceedings of the Catholic*

Theological Society of America (2006), 13–35. We are grateful for the permission of the Catholic Theological Society of America to reprint this text.

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Easter 2008

Craig R. Koester, St. Paul
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Chapter 1

From Discord Rises Meaning
Resurrection Motifs in the Fourth Gospel

Harold W. Attridge

1. The Tensive Elements in John's Gospel

On the subject of the resurrection, the Fourth Gospel is, as in so many other areas, full of tensive elements. Most obviously, resurrection is, in a fashion traditional within Judaism,[1] an event of the end times, when the dead shall arise to either positive or negative judgment (5:28), but that end time is already palpable (5:24). The resurrection is yet to come (11:24), but is also present in and through Jesus here and now (11:25).

Ambiguity in what the gospel teaches about resurrection thus parallels a significant element of tension in the treatment of the resurrection of Jesus and, more specifically, the relationship between the cross, empty tomb, and paschal appearances.[2] Much of the gospel focuses on the event of the

[1] As argued strongly by N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Christian Origins and the Question of God 3; London: SPCK, 2003). Among the many reactions see especially Markus Bockmuehl, "Compleat History of the Resurrection: A Dialogue with N.T. Wright," *JSNT* 26 (2004): 489–504, and Robert H. Smith, "Wright Thinking on the Resurrection?" *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 43 (2004): 244–51. Wright downplays the diversity in pre-Christian Jewish beliefs about the resurrection. For a similar approach to the Jewish evidence, see Richard Bauckham, "Life, Death, and the Afterlife in Second Temple Judaism," in *Life in the Face of Death: The Resurrection Message of the New Testament* (ed. Richard N. Longenecker; MacMaster New Testament Studies; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 80–95. For an alternative perspective, see George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism* (HTS 26; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1972), and with more data from the Scrolls, John J. Collins, *Seers, Sibyls and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* (JSJSup 54; Leiden: Brill, 1997). A critical point for assessing the possibilities available to the Fourth Gospel is how to construe the Wisdom of Solomon.

[2] For an insightful essay dealing with the whole issue see Andrew T. Lincoln, "'I am the Resurrection and the Life': The Resurrection Message of the Fourth Gospel," in Longenecker, ed., *Life in the Face of Death,* 122–44.

cross, which is the point where Jesus is "lifted up/exalted," where the work he has come to do is completed (19:30), where an effective sign is given that epitomizes and encapsulates the previous "signs." Like the serpent in the desert (3:14), the body of Jesus on the cross will heal when seen with the eyes of faith. Like the Son of Man coming in glory, Jesus lifted up on the cross will draw all people to himself (12:32). From the side of Jesus, who is suspended on the cross, comes the water and the blood that will nourish and cleanse (2:1–11; 4:10; 6:51–58; 7:37–39).[3] The cross is certainly a focal point of the text, both in its symbolism and in its underlying theology.[4] So why does the text continue with resurrection appearance accounts?[5] Are they merely afterthoughts, unavoidable elements of the resurrection tradition, simple illustrations of pious themes? Or do they serve an essential function in John's story of Jesus? The problem is exacerbated by the presence of chapter 21, which may have been added later,[6] but it is there already in chapter 20.

Two major strategies have marked the attempts to deal with these various tensive elements. First, there are the redactional hypotheses, which have loomed large in the world of twentieth-century Johannine scholarship.[7] Second, many readers of John have attempted to find an

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[3] On the motifs involved see especially John P. Heil, *Blood and Water: The Death and Resurrection of Jesus in John 18–21* (CBQMS 27; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1995).

[4] See Harold W. Attridge, "The Cubist Principle in Johannine Imagery: John and the Reading of Images in Contemporary Platonism," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John. Terms, Forms, Themes and Theology of Figurative Language* (ed. Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, Ruben Zimmermann, with Gabi Kern; WUNT 200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 47–60.

[5] Wright, *Resurrection*, 441, n. 122, cites C. F. Evans, *Resurrection and the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1970), 116. Strictly speaking, there is no place in the Fourth Gospel for resurrection stories, since the ascent or exaltation has already taken place." He also cites M.J.J. Menken, "Interpretation of the Old Testament and the Resurrection of Jesus in John's Gospel," in *Resurrection in the New Testament: FS J. Lambrecht* (ed. R. Bieringer, V. Koperski, and B. Lataire; Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 189–205.

[6] Most commentators still judge chapter 21 to be an appendix or "epilogue" (so D. Moody Smith, *John* [ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999] 389), but there have been recent vigorous defenses of its integral relationship with the rest of the Gospel. See Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 772–74.

[7] For a review of literature on John 5:28–29, which treats those verses as redactional, see Hans Christian Kammler, *Christologie und Eschatologie: Joh 5,17–30 als Schlüsseltext johanneischer Theologie* (WUNT 126; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 188–90. For a review of the redactional hypotheses about John 11, see Josef Wagner, *Auferstehung und Leben: Joh 11,1–12,19 als Spiegel johanneischer Redaktions-und Theologiegeschichte* (BU 19; Regensburg: Pustet, 1988), 29–94. Wagner defends a

integral eschatological framework within which realized and future understandings of resurrection cohere.[8] We will consider each of these approaches in turn.

From a redactional or diachronic perspective the characteristic core position of the Johannine tradition would be an interpretation of "resurrection" as a category relevant to the life of the believer in the here and now. This interpretation would mark a radical rethinking of the apocalyptic heritage of the early followers of Jesus. Such a radical departure could not stand in a religious movement that found a prominent place for eschatological hope. The radical impulse was blurred in the final stages of the Gospel which insisted on the reality of the physical resurrection of Jesus and on the futurity of resurrection hope for his followers. One interesting version of this position is represented by those who see Johannine theology engaging in critical dialogue with another identifiable branch of early Christianity, which was associated with the name of the apostle Thomas and attested by texts such as the *Gospel of Thomas* and *Acts of Thomas*.[9] For "Thomasine" Christians, resurrection would have been understood as an allegorical cipher for the spiritual transformation of individuals rather than a future reality. This is a position that many scholars have deemed to be characteristic of one stage of the development of the Gospel. For the Gospel in its final form, the reality of the physical resurrection is vital. This analysis recognizes the importance of the final chapters of the Gospel, although its reading of the physical character of the resurrected body may need correction. This position does not, however, do justice to the strain of "realized" eschatology in the gospel, except as an otiose remnant of a rejected alternative view.

Among those who would find a coherent eschatological framework integrating the tensive elements of resurrection language, some insist that the "realized" pole dominates and serves as the interpretive framework within which the "future" elements must be understood.[10] One prominent example of the latter is N. T. Wright's sometimes provocative treatment of resurrection in the NT, which offers a comprehensive reading of the Fourth

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redactional approach, based on that of Georg Richter, to the tensions in the resurrection passages.

[8] Kammler (*Christologie*, 191–94) usefully catalogs those who find John 5:28–29 integral to Johannine eschatology, a position that he himself espouses. In general, of course, see Jörg Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, Vol. 3: *Die eschatologische Verkündigung in den johanneischen Texten* (WUNT 117; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

[9] See especially Gregory Riley, *Resurrection Reconsidered: Thomas and John in Controversy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).

[10] E.g., Kammler, *Christologie*, 195–230.

Gospel.[11] Wright's overall project is not focused primarily on the Gospel of John, but on the issue of the historicity of the resurrection and its role as the cornerstone of the early Christian movement. He vigorously argues that there was a uniformity and coherence among early Christian proclamations of the resurrection. Not surprisingly, then, the Fourth Gospel fits the general pattern and the tensive elements find a home within that picture. The lynchpin of Wright's approach is provided by the hints that the Fourth Gospel portrays the resurrection as the beginning of a new creation.[12] Through the outpouring of the Spirit on Easter, a new way of living is made possible in the present, and it will have its consummation in a final resurrection. A "realized" eschatology is there, to be sure, but it does not exhaust the gospel's eschatological hope.

Wright's synthesis, whatever else it may do for understanding resurrection in early Christianity, is instructive, but may be in need of some refinement. I suggest that it does not do justice to the fact that there are tensions within the text. In what follows I would like to explore those tensions with a view to seeing how they might function in leading a reader (implied or otherwise) into an understanding of the meaning of resurrection generally.[13]

2. The Principal Resurrection Texts in John

It is important to follow the sequence of resurrection texts in John and to note the structure of what the gospel says about resurrection. Here we will consider the principal passages in which resurrection is mentioned, later asking how the tensions reflected here are – or are not – resolved in the conclusion of the gospel.

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[11] See note 1 above.

[12] This reading plays on the faint allusions to Genesis often found in the Resurrection stories, the tomb in the *garden* (20:15), on the *first day* (20:19) of a new week, with the new inbreathing of the Spirit (20:22). Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 767, also highlights these allusions in the Johannine account.

[13] My debt to the many Johannine scholars of recent years who have offered various reader-response and other literary readings of John should be obvious. For a brief presentation of my basic understanding of the way in which this Gospel works, see "Genre Bending in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 121 (2002): 3–21, and "The Restless Quest for the Beloved Disciple," in *Early Christian Voices: In Texts, Traditions, and Symbols: Essays in Honor of François Bovon* (ed. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, and David W. Pao; Biblical Interpretation Series 66; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 71–80.

Resurrection and the Son's Equality with the Father[14]

The first passage appears in the forensic debate of John 5, where Jesus refutes the charge of blasphemy for having made himself equal to God. There is an element of irony in the apologia, since all the defenses that Jesus offers finally are based on his in fact being equal to God.[15] The references to resurrection are woven into that defense. Jesus, the Son, has been taught to do all that the Father does. As instructed Son he is therefore not "equal to God." But what has the Father instructed him to do? The first type of act is raising the dead (5:21), but the description of the act has about it a studied ambiguity: "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to those whom he will." The present tense could have a generalizing force without any consideration of time. The point at which the Son "gives life" could be the eschatological future, where a literal resurrection takes place, or the present, when resurrection is a matter of spiritual rebirth.

Before the ambiguity reaches any resolution, the discourse turns to the theme of judgment, a notion hardly unexpected in a context where resurrection is in view. Resurrection and judgment usually hang together like Siamese twins.[16] The Gospel's treatment of the theme simply continues the tension. Jesus first (5:22) denies that the Father judges at all. Instead, he has given over the right to judge to the Son, with the explicit result that the Son will be honored as the Father is honored (5:24). The text thus makes a Christological point. Jesus, as the divine emissary, is functionally indistinguishable from God, but when he does his judging remains unclear. The reader who has in mind the text's earlier affirmation about judgment taking place when the light comes into the world (3:19)

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[14] See Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, 3.322–402, and Kammer, *Christologie*.

[15] See my "Argumentation in John 5," in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts* (ed. Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Übelacker; Emory Studies in Early Christianity 8; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2002), 188–99. Whatever we might say about the perspectives on resurrection in these verses, the discussion of the subject is formally subordinated to the basic theme of the discourse of chapter 5. That discourse focuses on the issue of the relationship between Jesus and the Father. Has Jesus (or the community that reveres him) made himself "equal to God" (5:18)? The response (5:19–47) consists of a playfully ironic forensic defense, which apparently begins by denying the charge. The defense insists that Jesus simply does what he sees the Father do. Yet every instance of that "imitation" of God by Jesus suggests that he has a very special status indeed, that he sees things from the perspective of heaven and that he "imitates" things that only God can do, particularly to raise people from the dead. Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, 2.398, rightly insists on the predominance of Christology over eschatology in the dynamics of the discourse.

[16] See Dan 12:1–3; Matt 25:1–46; Rev 20:11–15; etc.

might be forgiven for suspecting that judgment is not an event of the distant future but is a present reality.

What immediately follows, in the two solemn, "Amen, Amen" sayings, tends to confirm those suspicions. The first saying combines the themes of resurrection, expressed in terms of eternal life and judgment (5:24). The hint from 5:21 that the Son gives life in the here and now is made explicit: "The one who hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life, and does not come to judgment but has passed over from death to life." In the words of Hymenaeus and Philetus, the resurrection has already occurred (2 Tim 2:17–18)! Resurrection as metaphor triumphs. The point is reinforced in the second "Amen, Amen" saying (5:25). The "hour is coming and *now is* when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and those who have heard will come to life." Readers have yet to hear of a story of resurrection or even resuscitation, though when they later come to the story of Lazarus, who hears the voice of Jesus and comes from his tomb, this solemn proclamation may echo in their ears. The Son gives life as the agent of the Father, but the ante is upped even further in the next verse (John 5:26): The Father has given the Son to have life "in himself." His equality with God is not simply a matter of imitation. As plenipotentiary, he has all the powers that the Father has. Jesus provides life, and that claim shapes the understanding of "resurrection." Whenever one encounters the one whom the Father has sent, one has the possibility and the reality of life. Such a "realized" view of resurrection in the presence of such a Son has already been anticipated by those Johannine passages that have applied eschatological categories to the moment of encounter with Jesus (e.g., 3:36).

What follows in 5:28–29 introduces a discordant note. The "hour" in which those in the tomb will hear the voice of Jesus is "coming" (ἔρχεται). The hearer should not be amazed. The dead will arise, as they do in Daniel, Matthew, and Paul, to face judgment: those who have done what is good will experience the "resurrection of life," while those who have done ill will experience a "resurrection of judgment" (5:29).[17] In these verses a literal, future resurrection triumphs, [18] although the gospel does not explain how the relationship between the two resurrections works.

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[17] The judgment is in the hands of a "son of man" (v. 27). Whether this is an allusion to an eschatological "Son of Man" or simply to the status of Jesus as a human being is an intriguing question, but it does not affect the construal of resurrection in these verses. For the construal of the anarthrous *huios anthropou* as "human being" see Delbert Burkett, *The Son of Man in the Gospel of John* (JSNTSup 56; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 42, followed now by Thyen, *Johannesevangelium,* 315–18.

[18] Wright (*Resurrection*, 442) appeals to the verses with a decidedly futurist eschatology (chapters 5 and 6) as important data connecting John and the general Pharisaic and early Christian belief in the futurity of the "transphysical" resurrection.

In fact, by insisting that the future resurrection will lead to a judgment based on deeds, rather than on the will of the Son (5:21), these verses only exacerbate the tension.[19]

The intricate interplay between the "realized" and "future" aspects of resurrection, within which Jesus can so fully imitate the Father, may possibly be the result of redactional activity; but if so, what has the redactor achieved?[20] The references to a "realized" eschatology stand and have not been eliminated by the affirmation of a future resurrection. Would a reader notice the tension and be surprised by it? Would she be confirmed in a dominant theology that works, as does Paul, with a tension between the already and not yet? Or might she simply be confused, "wondering" (5:28) how the eschatological hope works?

Resurrection and the Bread of Life

The next large block of conversation about the resurrection appears in chapter 6, in the heart of the "bread of life" discourse, where "resurrection on the last day" is mentioned four times. The first reference appears in the initial midrashic interpretation of the "bread" of Psalm 78, paraphrased in John 6:31.[21] Jesus identifies himself as the "bread" of the scriptural text, and says that partaking of him provides "eternal life" plus "resurrection on the last day." The promise is repeated like a refrain through the chapter

[19] Some commentators attempt to reconcile the two divergent perspectives on resurrection by importing a distinction between the resurrection that believers experience in the present and the general resurrection that all will experience before final judgment. In that final judgment Jesus as judge "will decide between people who have died *before his advent* on the basis of their deeds." So Smith, *John,* 138. Such a limitation on who is affected by the final judgment seems quite arbitrary.

[20] A position resisted by Nils A. Dahl, "'Do Not Wonder!' John 5:28–29 and Johannine Eschatology Once More," in *The Conversation Continues: Studies in Paul and John in honor of J. Louis Martyn* (ed. Robert T. Fortna, Beverly R. Gaventa; Nashville: Abingdon, 1990), 322–36, cited by Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, 2.400. Both correctly point to the continuous interweaving of realized and future eschatological affirmations in the Gospel as a warrant for rejecting redactional hypotheses here. But have they done justice to the problem, at this stage of the gospel, of integrating the two perspectives? The command by Jesus not to wonder (v. 28) may constitute a recognition that the reader is doing just that.

[21] The fundamental analysis of the chapter remains that of Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (NovTSup 10; Leiden: Brill, 1965). See also idem, "John 6: Tradition, Interpretation and Composition," in *Critical Readings of John 6* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper; Biblical Interpretation Series 22; Leiden/New York/ Cologne: Brill, 1997), 95–114, repr. in Peder Borgen, *Early Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism* (Edinburgh: Clark, 1996), 205–29. Among recent treatments see Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6* (WUNT 2.77; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995).

with cloying frequency. In 6:39, who or whatever the Father gives to the Son will not perish, but Jesus will raise that one on the last day. In 6:40, whoever contemplates (θεωρῶν) the Son and believes in him will have eternal life, and Jesus will raise that contemplating believer on the last day. In 6:44, echoing 6:39 at a new stage of the midrash, whomever the Father draws to Jesus, Jesus will raise on the last day. In 6:54, whoever munches (τρώγων) on the flesh and drinks the blood of Jesus will have eternal life and Jesus will raise that one on the last day.

Whatever the redactional history of this text – and I suspect it is less complex than many theories have proposed – references to "resurrection on the last day" run through the discourse. They are, at several points, balanced with a-temporal promises of the "eternal life" that follows from "belief." Two of these appear in tandem with a resurrection promise (6: 40, 54). The second is an affirmation (6:47) at a climactic moment in the discourse, after the introduction of Isa 54:13, "They will be taught of God" (John 6:45). This set of affirmations concludes with a reference to the mutual abiding of eater and eaten, and the life that the eater will have through the true bread (6:56–58). Important textual variants could increase the number of references to a "realized eschatology." At the very least they show that scribes were somewhat confused by Johannine eschatology.[22]

It is, of course, possible to read this complex web of statements concerning resurrection/eternal life as the result of redactional interference, which has perhaps been made more complicated by the possible addition of 6:52–58. But if so, the balanced, tensive result is remarkable. In other words, if a redactor inserted the realistic sacramental and eschatological materials, he produced a final product that does not leave a clear and simple theological picture, but one that keeps odd elements bumping against one another. The creative tension, moreover, is a feature of both major portions of the discourse. The first, more "sapiential" portion, resembles depictions of wisdom as the true bread, and the actions involved are "seeing/believing" (θεωρῶν, πιστεύων, 6:40) and "hearing/learning" (ἀκούσας, μαθών, 6:45).[23] This part favors a metaphorical understanding of what consuming the true bread is all about. Whatever may happen "on the last day" is directly connected to the life that the believer has here and now (5:47–48).

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[22] See especially the tenses of the verb ζάω in v. 51.

[23] On the motif involved here see Craig R. Koester, "Hearing, Seeing and Believing in the Gospel of John," *Bib* 70 (1989): 327–48.

The second, more "sacramental" portion of the discourse (5:52–58),[24] although it lacks specific resurrection language, also holds out hope for a future life with the repeated promises that the one who eats "will live" (5:57, 58). One might be tempted to expect a simple correlation between an eschatology that insists on the physical character of end-time events and an interpretation of the ritual actions that focuses on the tangible dimensions of those actions, but the discourse is not so simple. What appears to be the concrete actions of eating flesh and drinking blood moves into the language of relationship between Jesus and the one who eats and drinks (5:56), a relationship that in turn extends the relationship between the Father and Jesus (5:57). It is that relationship that grounds the hope of future life (ζήσει/ζήσεται, 5:57).

The "bread of life" discourse thus reinforces the dioptic view of resurrection encountered in chapter 5. The gospel expresses hope for some future resurrection while insisting that some form of "eternal life" is available in the life of the believer in the present, and it maintains that the two are intimately connected. The insistence on the "realized" pole of the eschatological horizon and its relationship with the "realistic" understanding of the sacramental act might well be a corrective to an overly mechanistic understanding of the way in which the φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, to use Ignatius's phrase, works.[25] The final stage of the development of the resurrection and life themes in the discourse as we have it suggests that true life, both present and future, is a function of a relationship[26] with the Father that is mediated by the Son (6:56–58). The suggestion here comes close to the implicit resolution of the tensions in resurrection language that the Gospel will later offer.[27]

The entire chapter, whose canonical form there is no good reason to ignore, provides the context for the references to resurrection. The text construes the meaning of Christian ritual dining as a constitutive part of the relationship with the Father and with his Son, who gives himself in flesh and blood. Similarly, the references to a future corporeal resurrection

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[24] As always in John, more is going on in any given pericope than the surface themes indicate. In the case of this passage, the Christological significance of the "body and blood" certainly remains part of the picture, although an allusion to some ritual practice is hard to deny. See Maarten J.J. Menken, "John 6:51c–58: Eucharist or Christology?" in Culpepper, *Critical Readings*, 183–204.

[25] Eph 20.2. For a useful discussion of that text and the nuanced sense of the "medicine of immortality" in Ignatius, see Anderson, *Christology*, 119–27.

[26] The pregnant Johannine term "abide" (μένω)" appears here (v. 56) with its full connotations for the first time.

[27] For a suggestion about the centrality of these verses, see Joseph Grassi, "Eating Jesus' Flesh and Drinking His Blood: The Centrality and Meaning of John 6:51–58," *BTB* 17 (1987): 24–30.

reaffirm a widespread early Christian belief. The discourse, however, frames that hope in terms of understanding (*seeing, hearing, learning from*) the one who is himself the true bread. The understanding and the relationship, which stand in parallel as the interpretive frame of the traditional elements, are surely related, but our attentive reader may again wonder how to interpret the connection. Is it the case that the relationship is simply a matter of knowing the truth of who Jesus is?

Raising a Friend from the Dead

The tensive perspectives on resurrection continue into the story of the resurrection of Lazarus. The well-known story, in fact, epitomizes the "realized" pole of the Johannine resurrection, although it also has elements, whether redactional or compositional,[28] that resist that "realized" reading.

The key points arise in the exchanges between Jesus and Martha. The dramatic irony in the dialogue is patent. Martha reproaches Jesus, since he could have prevented the death of Lazarus (11:21). Jesus offers the reassurance that Lazarus will rise. Martha takes the reassurance to be an expression of the conventional hope in eschatological resurrection, "on the last day." Jesus responds with the solemn declaration that he is resurrection and life (11:25). For the believer, life is a reality even in the face of death. Indeed, the life that comes with belief in Jesus eternally negates death (11:26). Martha confesses belief in what Jesus has said, although that confession displays a wooden, formulaic quality that suggests lack of conviction.

The reproachful encounter with a conventionally pious Martha is repeated in the first stage of the encounter with a worshipful Mary (11:32). An emotional Jesus, perhaps frustrated that his friends do not seem to understand, does not bother to repeat that he is the resurrection and life for the believer. Instead, he raises his dead friend from the tomb.[29] Jesus is, quite dramatically, the resurrection and the life for Lazarus.

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[28] For a general review of earlier source and redactional theories, see Wagner, *Auferstehung*, 29–94, and Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, 3.403–62. See also Delbert Burkett, "Two Accounts of Lazarus' Resurrection in John 11," *NovT* 36 (1994): 209–32, positing two contrasting sources. Hartwig Thyen has argued forcefully for derivation from the Synoptics. See Hartwig Thyen, "Die Erzählung von den bethanischen Geschwistern (Joh 11,1–12,19) als 'Palimpsest' über synoptischen Texten,' in *The Four Gospels, 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (ed. F. Van Segbroeck, Christopher M. Tuckett, Gilbert Van Belle, J. Verheyden; BETL 100; 3 vols.; Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 1992), 2021–50, and his *Johannesevangelium*, 510–11.

[29] For a good review of the usual readings of the narrative flow, and a sensitive approach to the differences between Martha and Mary, see Francis J. Moloney, "Can Everyone be Wrong? A Reading of John 11.1–12.8," *NTS* 45 (2003): 505–27, as well as

Now with the raising of Lazarus, the declaration that those in the tombs would hear the voice of Jesus and come forth (5:28–29) is dramatically realized.[30] At one level the "realized" pole of the resurrection sayings of the previous chapters is now transparent. It all refers to the acts that the historical Jesus performed. But the meaning of the "realized" resurrection sayings transcends their function in the narrative. The general, universalizing language of 11:24–26 invites an application of the significance of the "sign" of Lazarus' resurrection to the world of the Gospel's audience.[31] It is precisely that transference that sidelines questions about the duration of Lazarus's resurrected life. Once he has been raised from the dead and the act has been interpreted, narrative interest in Lazarus largely disappears. He makes a brief cameo dinner appearance at Bethany (12:2), which gives the narrator an opportunity to tell us that the high priests were seeking to kill him (12:20). His resuscitation thus seems to be qualitatively different from that of Jesus, since he remains liable to death. The Gospel has offered a significant story, a "sign" that, whatever its historical value, has immediate symbolic significance for people wanting to become followers of Jesus. The event of Lazarus' resurrection symbolically affirms that any who come to Christ will enjoy life full and complete in the present as well as renewed "on the last day."[32]

The tension between present and future eternal life remains formally unresolved at this stage of the narrative.[33] In fact, the Lazarus story

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his earlier piece, "The Faith of Martha and Mary: A Narrative Approach to John 11,17–40," *Bib* 75 (1994): 471–93.

[30] The intimate connection between John 5 and 11 is often recognized. See Frey, *Eschatologie* 2.401.

[31] For one reading that realizes that universalizing potential of the text, see Sandra Schneiders, "Death in the Community of Eternal Life: History, Theology, and Spirituality in John 11," *Int* 41 (1987): 44–56.

[32] For various narrative-critical approaches to the text that offer similar readings, see Wilhelm Wuellner, "Rhetorical Criticism and its Theory in Culture-Critical Perspective: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11," in *Text and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament* (ed. P. J. Hartin and J. H. Petzer; NTTS 15; Leiden: Brill, 1991), 171–85; idem, "Putting Life Back into the Lazarus Story and Its Reading: The Narrative Rhetoric of John 11 as the Narration of Faith," *Semeia* 53 (1991): 113–132; Mark W. G. Stibbe, "A Tomb with a View: John 11.1–44 in Narrative-Critical Perspective," *NTS* 40 (1994): 38–54; Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger, "Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala – Two Female Characters in the Johannine Passion Narrative: A Feminist, Narrative-Critical Reader Response," *NTS* 41 (1995): 564–86, here 570–78.

[33] Some readings move too quickly to resolve the tension, e.g., Paul S. Minear, "The Promise of Life in the Gospel of John," *ThTo* 49 (1993): 485–99, who interprets the death from which believers are delivered here and now as the metaphorical death of sin. The interpretation, which has merit, only comes from a survey of the whole gospel. The tensive character of the affirmations at this point are obscured.

continues and intensifies the tensions that have been present in earlier chapters. Jesus is the resurrection and the life for the believer in the here and now. That is physically true for Lazarus, who hears the voice of the Son of Man and comes out of his tomb. Is the promise of a present realization of eschatological hope reduced to a miraculous event in the past? Or does that event signify something in the present reality of the believer? The obvious choice is the second option, but it is not at all clear what the present reality of resurrected life really means. The evangelist, as usual, teases as the thematic structure of the gospel weaves ahead.

The first half of the gospel has left the reader with a riddle. Resurrection in the future, on the "last day," which is a standard hope of pious Pharisee and follower of Jesus alike, is assumed. Alongside that postulate is a set of strong claims, even more insistent than their parallels in chapters 5 and 6, that resurrection and participation in "eternal life" are a reality experienced in the encounter with Jesus. How the two are combined remains something of a mystery, particularly because the realized pole remains largely an assertion. What it means to have eternal life here and now remains opaque.

The development of the theme of resurrection parallels the theme of revelation. As Bultmann famously described it, Jesus reveals only that he is the revealer. This is certainly the case, but only for the first half of the gospel. In the farewell discourses and in the event of cross and resurrection that they interpret, revelation achieves a content, which is to love one another. This is expressed in example (13:15), command (13:31), parable (15:1–7), and proverb (15:13).[34]

What is true for the content of revelation is also true for the specification of the contemporary reality of resurrection, and the two are intimately connected. By the end of the Lazarus story a present resurrection remains a cipher, an unfulfilled, tantalizing lure. A reader schooled in Christian tradition may have had some suspicions about what the story might mean, particularly on the basis of the relational language of 5:56–57. The suspicion might have been reinforced by one prominent feature of the Lazarus story, which is that the resurrected one was a friend whom Jesus loved (11:3; 5, 11, 36). A relationship of intimacy was critical to this signal "resurrection" and may be an important part of how this "sign" signifies.

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[34] Example: 13:15; command: 13:31; parable (and proverb) 15:13. On the latter see K. Scholtissek, "'Eine grossere Liebe als diese hat niemand, als wenn einer sein Leben hingibt für seine Freunde' (Joh 15,13): Die hellenistische Freundschaftsethik und das Johannesevangelium," in *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: Das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditionsfeschichtlicher Perspektive* (ed. Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 413–41.

Anointing for Resurrection

With the anointing scene of John 12:1–8 attention shifts from the present and/or future promises of resurrection to the resurrection of Jesus. The details of the account have intrigued commentators. The fact that Mary wipes the precious nard from Jesus' feet with her hair may perhaps hint at the notion that Jesus body will not need embalming unguents.[35] The aroma of the ointment filling the house evokes other olfactory images.[36] Judas's stingy comment (12:6) sets the stage for his possession by Satan in the next chapter (13:27).[37] Whatever connotations the details may suggest, Jesus' explanation of Mary's action (12:7) orients the reader's attention to the future, to his burial, a destiny that awaits him, in part at least, because of his raising of Lazarus (12:9–11). But if the entombment of the dead Jesus is a result of his resurrection of Lazarus, what will his resurrection accomplish?

Resolution anticipated: The Farewell Discourses?[38]

One of the often noted features of the last supper discourses is their collapse of temporal horizons.[39] Jesus seems to speak as one already glorified, while he promises future support and consolation for his persecuted flock through the person of the Paraclete. The topic of resurrection does not explicitly surface in these discourses, but the eschatological horizon does, and it does so in a way that reinforces the "realized" pole of the resurrection antinomies of the earlier chapters. The two related images through which this occurs are the motif of "abiding" and the promise of the Paraclete.

The conceptual structure of the first image replicates that of the image of resurrection and the structural homology is significant. The way in which the image works is familiar to any reader of John. The departure of Jesus, solemnly announced at the beginning of chapter 14, has as its goal the preparation of the dwellings (μοναί: condos? flats?) for the disciples

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[35] Charles H. Giblin, "Mary's Anointing for Jesus' Burial-Resurrection (John 12,1–8)," *Bib* 73 (1992): 560–64.

[36] See 2 Cor 2:14. The passage may be one intertext in the complex trope on sacred aroma by second-century homilist who gave us the *Gospel of Truth* NHC 1,4: 33.33–34.33.

[37] The relationship between the two passages recalls the comments at 2:20–21 about those who do base deeds not being the elect.

[38] Literature on the final discourses is vast. Among recent work, see especially Udo Schnelle, "Die Abschiedsreden im Johannesevangelium," *ZNW* 80 (1989): 64–79.

[39] On temporal categories in John see especially Frey, *Die johanneische Escahtologie,* 2.208–83.

(14:2).[40] Jesus will, he says, return and gather up (παραλήμψομαι) the disciples with him – perhaps a Johannine acknowledgment of notions of the "rapture" (1 Thess 4:17).[41] The result will be a blissful cohabitation (John 14:3). All of this future-oriented language finds a new twist in the subsequent plays on "abiding" (μένω). Later in chapter 14, the mutual abiding of God, Christ, and the believers is made possible by the "abiding" (μένει) presence of the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth (14:17). It is presumably because of that Spirit that Jesus will not leave his disciples as orphans but will come to them (14:18). Here is certainly one stage of the return promised in 14:2. When that happens, Jesus and the disciples will "live" (14:19). The Father will abide in Christ and in them, and vice versa.

Whether by the same or a different hand,[42] the same troping on future promises that are made present in contemporary abiding continues in chapter 15.[43] The branches "abide" in Jesus their vine through obedience to his command to love (15:5–7, 10). That abiding saves them from the threat of being cut off and burned (15:6), an image with none too subtle hints of eschatological judgment.[44] The Paraclete/Spirit that has made the abiding possible will also empower people for witness (15:26–27) and exercise judgment over the world (16:8–10).

As the voice of Jesus in the final discourses sounds from a virtually exalted state, combining history and eschatology, so do the promises that he offers. Life with Jesus in God's house will be, from the point of view of the narrative, a future reality; but from the point of view of the reader/hearer it is a present fact. That life is made possible by the presence of the Spirit of Truth, the abiding divine presence that instructs and empowers the disciples while it judges "the world." Whatever the long-range possibilities for the created order, those who believe already experience eschatological reality, but the key to that reality is the presence of the Spirit; and before the Spirit comes it is necessary that Jesus depart

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[40] For the interpretation of this complex text see especially Frey, *Die johanneische Eschatologie*, 3.119–78.

[41] See Thyen, *Johannesevanglium*, 620–21.

[42] See Wayne Brouwer, *The Literary Development of John 13–17: A Chiastic Reading* (SBLDS 182; Atlanta: SBL, 2000); George Parsenios, *Departure and Consolation: the Johannine farewell Discourses in light of Greco-Roman Literature* (NovTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2005), both of which wrestle with the issue of the unity of the composition. Parsenios, drawing on ancient dramatic conventions, in particular provides an ingenious literary framework within which to understand some of the *aporias* of the discourses.

[43] In general see Klaus Scholtissek, *In ihm sein und bleiben: Die Sprache der Immanenz in den johanneischen Schriften* (HBS 21; Freiburg im Breisgau/New York: Herder, 2000).

[44] Cf. Matt 15:30; Heb 6:8; Rev 20:14.

(16:7). Here is where the resurrection of Jesus begins to emerge as a pivotal point.

The Resurrection Accounts

As Wright notes, the two chapters on the resurrection in John constitute remarkable pieces of literature.[45] They are richly textured, with dramatic encounters between the resurrected Jesus and his disciples, with implications for the Johannine understanding of faith, of community, of what it might mean to be raised from the dead, of love, longing, and fulfillment. How then, do they resolve the tensions that have built through the gospel?

The very existence of the chapters is, as we initially noted, something of an anomaly.[46] The description of the crucifixion is a nodal point where several important themes and images of the gospel come together. Much of the gospel leading up to chapter 19 has pointed to the cross as the moment of glorification and to the "seeing" that provides healing. Jesus himself declares on the cross that his work is complete just before he breathes his last and becomes the font of bloody, but therefore life-giving, water.

The gospel's insistence on the real death of the truly human Jesus on that cross is indeed central to its construal of who Jesus is and what he, as revealer, in fact reveals.[47] But it is also clear from various hints in the text that the cross is only one facet of a complex moment of "glorification." The final discourses, despite their anticipation of hearing the voice of the glorified one, tell of the coming of the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth. As of chapter 19, the Spirit has been given up, but not given out. Another moment is needed, another side of "glorification" must be seen, and so comes John 20, and on its heels, John 21. Of all the things that these chapters do, they above all celebrate the reality of resurrection in a way that resolves, but at the same time extends the tensions of the previous

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[45] Wright, *Resurrection*, 662: "among the most glorious pieces of writing on the resurrection" . . . a "deceptively simple account of the Easter events, warm with deep and human characterization, pregnant with new possibilities."

[46] Lincoln ("'I am the Resurrection,'" 124) usefully cites Bultmann, "If Jesus' death on the cross is already his exaltation and glorification, his resurrection cannot be an event of special significance. No resurrection is needed to destroy the triumph which death might be supposed to have gained in the crucifixion. For the cross itself was already triumphant over the world and its ruler" (*Theology of the New Testament* [2 vols.; New York: Scribners, 1955] 2.56).

[47] As pointed out by the many critics of Käsemann. See, e.g., Udo Schnelle, *Antidocetic Christology in the Gospel of John* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992); trans. of *Antidoketische Christologie im Johannesevangelium* (FRLANT 144; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).

accounts into the life of the reader. Reflecting on how that is so will consume the remainder of this essay.

3. The Tension Resolved?

The reader of the rest of the gospel may ask how the future of resurrected life is a present reality. If attentive to the hints of chapters 6 and 14, she will know that it has to do with relationship, with abiding in the Son who abides in the Father. And she may know, from the command that Jesus gave (13:31; 15:11) and parable he told that abiding has to do with love (15:13), an extravagant love that is willing to sacrifice all for the sake of the "friend." Abiding in such all-consuming, radical love, is to abide in God, as the Johannine epistolographer will remind his addressees (1 John 4:16). But is that not, as critics will aver, a romantic, or sectarian notion?[48] Our hypothetical attentive reader will also have heard something about the coming of the Paraclete, who will teach and intercede for believers. She may suspect that in the presence of the Paraclete the reality of new, resurrected life is grounded. Such hopes and suspicions are confirmed, perhaps even rewarded, in the account of the appearance of Jesus to the disciples on Easter night. Jesus now fulfills the promise to provide the Spirit to his disciples in what many have dubbed the Johannine Pentecost.[49]

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[48] For stern modern critiques of the Johannine perspective, see Maurice Casey, *Is John's Gospel True?* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996) and, with more restraint, Wayne Meeks, "The Ethics of the Fourth Evangelist," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In honor of D. Moody Smith* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996), 317–26.

[49] For another view of the significance of the verse, focusing on the Christological implications of the relationship of Christ and Spirit, see Gavin D' Costa, "Resurrection, the Holy Spirit and World Religions," in idem, ed., *Resurrection Reconsidered* (Oxford: OneWorld, 1996), 163; Pamela Kinlaw, *The Christ is Jesus: Metamorphosis, Possession, and Johannine Christology* (Academia Biblica; Leiden and Boston: Brill , 2005), 161. The Christological point here is surely misplaced: The resurrection is hardly the confirmation of the Paraclete's permanent indwelling in Jesus. The account has something to say about what the presence of the Spirit means to the followers of Jesus. For a carefully nuanced reading of the Paraclete passages and their theological and Christological significance, see Hans-Christian Kammler, "Jesus Christus und der Geistparklet: Eine Studie zur johanneischen Verhältnisbestimmung von Pneumatologie und Christologie," in *Johannesstudien: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des vierten Evangeliums* (ed. Otfried Hofius and Hans-Christian Kammler; WUNT 88; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), 88–190. For an alternative, setting the notions of the Spirit and the resurrection of Jesus into a Stoic framework, see Gitte Buch-Hansen," It is the Spirit that

The importance of the verse in tying Johannine threads together has often been noted. Yet the variety of interpretations of John 20:22 illustrates the principle that there is nothing like solutions to cause problems.[50] Comparison with the Synoptics and with Acts raises numerous questions about the evangelist's timetable for Jesus on earth. Was the ascension yet to come or had it taken place after Jesus left Mary in the garden (more likely). Was this a proleptic bestowal of the Spirit in order to enable mission, with more to come at Pentecost, or was this the real and final thing?[51] Such questions, which arise in a canonical context, are beside the point in the narrative world of the Gospel. Now the reader will have some sense that the way to follow the love displayed on the cross is to abide in the community where forgiveness is practiced. What the Spirit/Paraclete teaches is how to provide that forgiveness. In that act resides eternal life.

Spirit-powered forgiveness is, in the structure of resurrection chapters, surrounded by relationships with Jesus, which are built on new encounters with his mysterious transformed presence.[52] In those encounters, those relationships, faith happens – on the basis of physical signs (20:8),[53] on the basis of a personal address of shepherd to his own sheep (20:16),[54] in the

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Makes Alive (6:63): A Stoic Understanding of Pneuma in John" (Ph.D. Diss. Copenhagen, 2007).

[50] James Swetnam, S.J., "Bestowal of the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel," *Bib* 74 (1993): 556–76, although the story extends beyond a claim about the bestowal of apostolic authority on the disciples; T. R. Hatina, "John 20,22 in Its Eschatological Context: Promise or Fulfillment?" *Bib* 74 (1993): 196–219.

[51] See the discussion by Cornelis Bennema, "The Giving of the Spirit in John's Gospel – A New Proposal?" *Evangelical Quarterly* 74 (2002): 195–213. See also his *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT 2.148; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

[52] As noted among others by P. Benoit, "Marie-Madeleine et les Disciples au Tombeau selon Joh 20,1–18," in *Judentum–Urchristentum–Kirche: FS Joachim Jeremias* (ed. Walther Eltester; BZNW 26; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1960), 141–52; Raymond Brown, "The Resurrection in John 20–A Series of Diverse Reactions," *Worship* 64 (1990): 194–206; Dorothy A. Lee, "Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20," *JSNT* 58 (1995): 37–49.

[53] But what does the Beloved Disciple really believe? The answer is ambiguous, but even if, in the narrative world, he only believes Mary's report that the tomb is empty, the reader is invited to come to a deeper belief. For the reading of the belief in simple narrative terms, see James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995), 177.

[54] Much has been made, in the decade of Dan Brown, of the relationship between Jesus and Mary, and its evocation of John 10:4. See Teresa Okure, "The Significance Today of Jesus' Commission of Mary Magdalene," *IRM* 81 (1992): 177–88; I. R. Kitzberger, "Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala – Two Female Characters in the Johannine Passion Narrative: A Feminist, Narrative-Critical Reader Response," *NTS* 41 (1995): 564–86; Dorothy A. Lee, "Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary

challenge to believe without seeing (20:29),[55] and in the sharing of a meal with a stranger (21:12). The encounters of John 20 and 21 might be taken as a typology of kinds of faith-producing moments, which may or may not have some hierarchical value.

The encounters with the resurrected one also serve one other important function in the economy of this Gospel's theology, which is so much concerned with the foundations of belief. Sarah Coakley suggests that the ensemble serves to illustrate a fundamental hermeneutical principle that sounds familiar to modern ears, that belief and knowledge come not in the abstract, but precisely from an experience of lived engagement.[56] Another way of framing her insight is to consider the way in which the resurrection appearance stories at the end of the gospel offer a subtle critique of their own role in the life of faith. For the Fourth Gospel the resurrection of Christ is the *conditio sine qua non* for the life of faith, but it is not a warrant for that faith. It is the ultimate *semeion* in the text, an event that has meaning only as a pointer to a reality beyond itself. The gospel's critique of a naïve belief on the basis of signs hangs as a background warning to the reader who would take the resurrection as an event that suffices to compel belief in the Resurrected One.[57] The Gospel knows him to be elusive, now inaccessible to the sight of potential disciples, not easily

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Magdalene and Thomas in John 20," *JSNT* 58 (1995): 37–49; Sandra Schneiders, "John 20:11–18: The Encounter of the Easter Jesus with Mary Magdalene – A Transformative Feminist Reading," in "*What is John?" Readers and Readings of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; SBLSS 3; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996), 155–68; Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1998), 143–67.

[55] For the suggestion that the "signs" referred to in John 20,30–31 refer not to the miraculous deeds of Jesus, but to the grounds of resurrection belief, see Paul Minear, "The Original Function of John 21," *JBL* 102 (1983): 85–98, and Hans-Christian Kammler, "Die 'Zeichen' des Auferstandenen: Überlegungen zur Exegese von Joh 20,30–31," in *Johannesstudien: Untersuchungen zur Theologie des vierten Evangeliums* (ed. Otfried Hofius and Hans-Christian Kammler; WUNT 88; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996), 191–211. Contra, Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 774.

[56] Sarah Coakley, "The Resurrection: The Grammar of 'Raised'," in *Biblical Concepts and Our World* (ed. D. Z. Phillips and Mario von der Ruhr; Claremont Studies in the Philosophy of Religion; New York and Houndmills, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 169–89.

[57] See especially 2:18; 4:48; 6:26. Among more recent literature on the topic see Marinus De Jonge, "Signs and Works in the Fourth Gospel," in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica* (ed. Tjitze Baarda, A. F. J. Klijn and Willem C. van Unnik; NovTSup 48; Leiden: Brill, 1978), 107–25; Marianne Meye Thompson, "Signs and Faith in the Fourth Gospel," *BBR* 1 (1991): 89–108; Loren L. Johns and Douglas V. Miller, "The Signs as Witnesses in the Fourth Gospel: Reexamining the Evidence," *CBQ* 56 (1994): 519–35; Andreas J. Köstenberger, "The Seventh Johannine Sign: A Study in John's Christology," *BBR* 5 (1995): 87–103.

recognizable even when he was with his own. Tokens of his resurrection (i.e., the accounts of the empty tomb in resurrection narratives) and visions (i.e., the list of authoritative witnesses that Paul provided[58]) could cause some to believe in the reality of his abiding presence. But it is only the experience of that presence that provides any ground for belief, and that presence is encountered in the community where the Spirit resides.

The overall thrust of the resurrection stories, therefore, seems to reinforce the "realized" dimension of the Johannine resurrection theme. And yet, all the stories are grounded in the presence of one who came back from the dead, in however mysterious a form.[59] The dialectic that pervades the narrative also informs the ending, although in a reverse or chiastic order. Previously the hopes for a future literal resurrection, while affirmed, were constantly refracted onto the life of the believer, but in a way that remained formal and tantalizing. In the conclusion, the reality of resurrected life in the present is given definition as a life of Spirit-filled love that issues in forgiveness. But that realized experience of the way in which a believer abides with Father and Son in a mysteriously glorious present is rooted in the physical (or to take up Wright's term, "transphysical") reality of the resurrected Christ. The evangelist seems most interested in the ways in which resurrected life have meaning in the present, [60] but he insists that they are intimately tied to the resurrected reality of Christ, and with this reality abides a hope for the continued relationship that the presence of the Spirit portends.

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[58] 1 Cor 15:1–8.

[59] For another approach to the issue of bodily resurrection in the text, see Sandra M. Schneiders, "The Resurrection (of the Body) in the Fourth Gospel," in *Life in Abundance: Studies of John's Gospel in Tribute to Raymond E. Brown* (ed. John R. Donahue; Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 168–99.

[60] For a comparable reading of the reality of the resurrection, see Rowan Williams, "Between the Cherubim: The Empty Tomb and the Empty Throne," in *Resurrection Reconsidered* (ed. Gavin D'Costa; Oxford: OneWorld, 1996), 87–101. Taking his cue from the two angels of John 20:12, understood as an allusion to the Cherubim over the ark of the covenant, Williams insists on the messy indeterminacy of the resurrection stories.that point in complex ways to the reality of Jesus, bestower of the Spirit, active in the corporate life of the Church (p. 93). Although his point is more general, the archbishop relies heavily on the treatment of resurrection in the Fourth Gospel.

Chapter 2

"The Light Shines in the Darkness. . ." Creation, Incarnation, and Resurrection in John

John Painter

"The Light shines in the darkness" is a title that reveals the narrative unity of creation, incarnation and resurrection in John. This motif is announced early (John 1:5) and re-echoes throughout the gospel (1:4–5, 9–10; 3:19–21 [cf. 9:39]; 8:12; 9:4–5; 12:35–36, 46). The images of night and day function as metaphors of darkness and light in 3:2 and 13:30. In the former, Nicodemus comes out of the night into the presence of the light of the world. In the latter, Judas leaves the light of Jesus' presence and goes out into the night and his fate is sealed. Elsewhere Jesus says that work must be done while it is day and that as long as he is in the world he is the light of the world (9:4–5). This implies the darkness of the world without the presence of Jesus as well as that Jesus' withdrawal through death marks the coming of the night. Yet the resurrection of Jesus is marked by the dawning of a new day (20:1), where again the light shines in the darkness.

The relevance of the light shining in darkness (1:5) for our understanding of creation and incarnation seems obvious from the placement of this statement. It stands between the Prologue's statements that all things were made through the Word (1:3) and that the Word became flesh (1:14), as well as between the reference to creation and the light entering the world (1:3, 9). But there is no *specific* mention of the resurrection in the Prologue or of creation and incarnation in the resurrection narrative (John 20–21). Accordingly, we will argue here that the Johannine understanding of creation implies the incarnation and resurrection, and that resurrection presupposes creation and incarnation.[1] The incompleteness of the creation, implied by the struggle with the darkness (1:5), presupposes the incarnation in which God became united with the creation to bring it to completion. The incarnation presupposes the resurrection because the Logos made flesh was on his way to dusty death and corruption. In the resurrection the

[1] This is the view of Brooke Foss Westcott. See especially chapter 1 of his *The Gospel of the Resurrection* (8th ed.; London: Macmillan 1898).