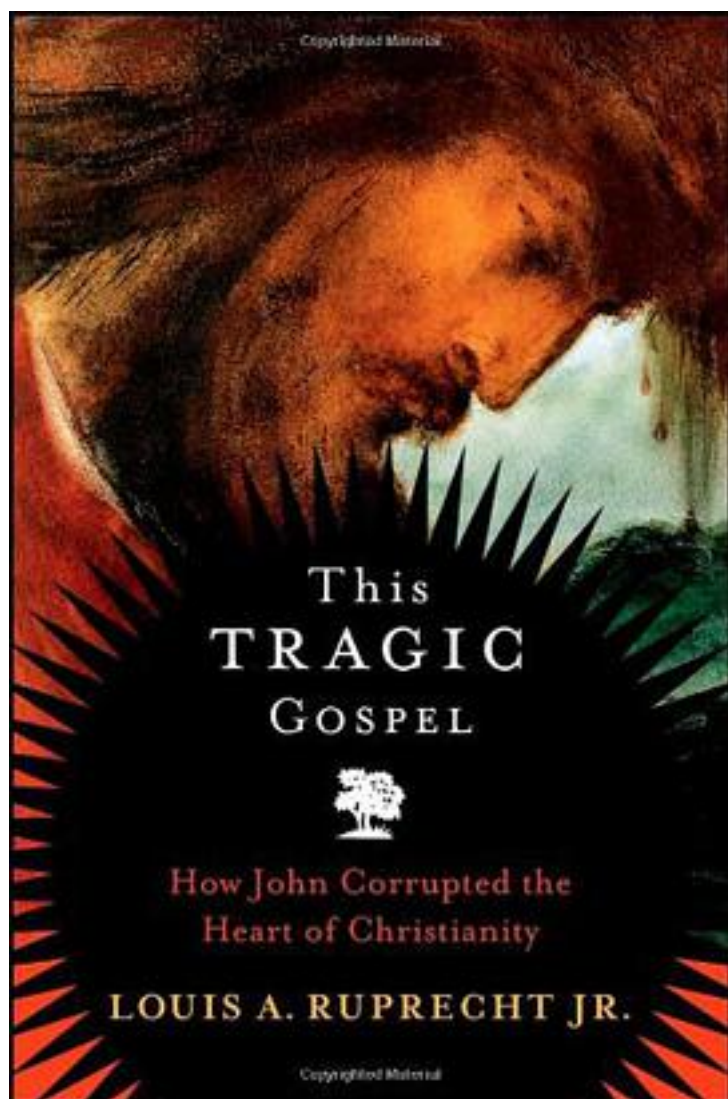


# This Tragic Gospel



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This Tragic Gospel suggests that the "Gospel" of John intended to supplant the first three gospels and succeeded in gaining undue influence on the early churches. This study focuses on the tragic moment when Jesus prays for deliverance from his impending death in the garden of Gethsemane. Ruprecht contends that John rewrote this scene in order to convey a very different dramatic meaning from the one reflected in Mark's gospel. In John's version, not only did Jesus not pray to be spared, he actually mocked this prayer, embracing his imminent demise with godlike confidence. Ruprecht believes that this dramatic reinterpretation undermined the tragedy of Jesus's death as Mark imagined it and so paved the way for the development of a kind of Christianity that focused far less on compassion in the face of human suffering. John's Jesus offers the faithful food so that they will never hunger, water so that they will never thirst, and the promise of a world in which no faithful person ever sheds a tear. Mark's Christians do suffer, but they witness to suffering and death differently...with compassion. Mark's Christ suffers, like all Christians after him, but he embodies a tragic hope in the promise of a faith shored up by love and compassion.

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