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THE HOLY ONE OF GOD:
JOHN'S MESSIAH WHO IS YHWH
OF MOSES' EXODUS WRITINGS

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THE HOLY ONE OF GOD:
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OF MOSES' EXODUS WRITINGS

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In gratitude to God for Don Bazal,
who faithfully and powerfully preached the Law and the Prophets,
giving me eyes for ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ.

Soli Deo Gloria!

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PREFACE

This research thesis is my attempt to explore the nature and works of the triune God through the Word of God, given in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This was my intent when considering doctoral studies. The Doctor of Ministry in New Testament Exposition fulfilled a desire to study both Old and New Testaments, while providing an accessible and challenging opportunity to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; for this gift I am grateful to God, to The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and to Dr. Bill Cook, whose ministry over the last twenty-two years has been invaluable.

I have not written this thesis in a theological vacuum. In God's good providence I was raised by godly parents who modeled love for and trust in Holy Scripture, which alone is the "perfect treasure of divine instruction" and in every part testifies to Christ "who is Himself the focus of divine revelation" (*Baptist Faith and Message, 2000*). For my parents, Carlton and Deborah, for their commitment to God's Word and their testimony to Christ, I am truly grateful.

I have had the privilege of writing this thesis while pastoring First Baptist Church, Graceville, Florida. I am thankful for their support and encouragement in this endeavor, and for the privilege of serving them as pastor. In addition, over the years the Lord has placed several men in my life who have befriended me, taught me, and contributed to my understanding of God's Word and gospel ministry. Chris Adams, Judson Vaughn, and David Gaugh have each provided helpful feedback for this thesis.

I have dedicated this thesis to Dr. Don Bazal. In God's kindness, Don was my pastor from 1992-1999. It was under his preaching that the Holy Spirit began to open my eyes to the glory of God's holiness—His greatness and grace, majesty and imminence,

mercy and might. Don's preaching of the Law and Prophets lifted my eyes to the heavens, while sending my knees to the earth. That YHWH was indeed holy, and his holiness was glorious and beyond the comprehension of man, and that he had also condescended and bound himself to sinners in covenant love—this was a world in which I wanted to live forever. By the grace of God and the work of the Spirit, Don's preaching gave me eyes to see the Holy One of the Law and the Prophets. With these eyes I was able to then recognize the utter uniqueness of the Holy One of God, Jesus Christ (John 6:69). For Don and his wife, Kay, I will be ever thankful.

Under God, it is to my wife, Hannah, that I am most grateful. She has encouraged, supported, and at times endured my tenure as a student in theological education. From the MDiv to the DMin, it has been an eighteen-year excursion. Yet, she has remained constant in her care, encouragement, and patience. For her, and for her love and ministry to me, I am exceedingly thankful to the Lord. Truly, "An excellent wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good, and not harm, all the days of her life" (Prov 31:10-12). Moreover, our children, Karah, Simeon, and Jeremiah, have been my joy and source of escape from the long hours of research and writing. May God grant them each increasing confidence and firm faith that Jesus has the words of eternal life, and that he alone is the Holy One of God.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Who is Jesus? The identity of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph and Son of God, is the crux of the Christian faith; and his identity is ever central to the life of the church. As such, his identity is of fundamental theological concern for the Fourth Gospel (FG). In the beginning of his Gospel, John brings Jesus' identity to center stage by way of high Christological assertions (1:1-18); the answers John proceeds to supply to the implicit and explicit identity question are just as staggering as his prologue. The FG articulates Jesus' identity by recounting his words and works in order to advance the Gospel's purpose, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (20:31). In this word-work formulation, John calls upon several voices to identify the Rabbi from Nazareth (1:38, 46), the only God from the Father (1:18). In doing so, the apostle endeavors to elicit life-receiving faith in his readers. One of those prophetic voices is that of Peter in 6:69: "And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God."¹

In this thesis I will demonstrate that by hailing Jesus as the Holy One of God in 6:69, the FG identifies him as YHWH of Moses' Exodus writings, and the One consecrated to give eternal life.² Moreover, Peter's confession is a distillation of the implicit and explicit theological assertions made about Jesus throughout chapters 5:1–7:52. I will demonstrate that these chapters repeatedly present Jesus as YHWH of the Exodus, and as

¹ All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

² In this thesis the word "Exodus" is used in three ways: (1) "the Exodus" refers to Israel's departure from Egypt after YHWH passed over Israel and struck down the firstborn of the land (Exod 12:11-13); (2) "Exodus writings" refers to Genesis–Deuteronomy, written by Moses during the wilderness wanderings; and (3) "Exodus events" refers to significant, formative events in Exodus–Deuteronomy which occurred before and after the Exodus from Egypt.

the prophet-Messiah whose words give eternal life. In his equality and unity with God the Father, Jesus gives life, raises the dead, and will judge the world (5:17-18, 19-29). He is the Messiah and prophet of whom Moses wrote (5:46; 6:14), the prophet-king who miraculously provides for his wilderness people (6:1-15), the ever-present “I Am” and savior on the sea (6:16-21), the bread of heaven and Passover meal (6:22-59), the One who has the words of eternal life (6:68), and the wilderness rock who gives the Holy Spirit (7:37-39). In short, Jesus is “the Holy One of God” (6:69).

The title “Holy One of God” is climactic and comprehensive. The phrase comprehensively speaks to Jesus’ unique identity as YHWH, and as the One uniquely consecrated by the Father for his salvific, life-giving purposes (10:36). This is especially highlighted in the Feast Cycle of chapters 5–10, where Jesus speaks YHWH’s life-giving words and does his redemptive work in Exodus-like fashion. Thus, Peter’s confession serves as a climactic distillation of what Moses wrote about the Messiah, and an extoling of the unseen God’s revelation in Jesus Christ.

Familiarity with the Literature

Despite the wealth of material produced concerning the FG, relatively little has been written on John 6:69. Much has been said about the high Christology and the relationship of the FG with the Johannine community and the synoptic Gospels, as well as its relationship with Moses, the Torah, and the institutions and themes surrounding the Exodus event. Yet, there is an obvious void concerning Peter’s confession. I have narrowed the secondary sources down to several categories, ranging from theological analyses and exegetical summaries of the FG and Johannine literature, to two articles that specifically address the title “Holy One of God” in 6:69. The categories consist of several NT and Johannine theologies, commentaries on the FG, Exodus and Deuteronomy, books and articles analyzing biblical-theological themes of the FG, and other works which may shed light on the texts under consideration.

New Testament and Johannine Theologies

New Testament theologies include those by Frank Thielman, George Ladd, Leon Morris, Frank Matera, and Tom Schreiner.³ In their own right, these works excel in summarizing the contents and major theological themes of NT books, including the Johannine corpus. I will consider these sources in order to situate this thesis in the wider context of John's major themes. Yet, a more relevant and focused body of literature consists of works analyzing the FG for biblical-theological themes. Richard Bauckham's *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, Andreas Köstenberger's *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, Gary Wheaton's *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, D. Moody Smith's *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, Andreas Köstenberger and Scott Swain's *Father, Son, and Spirit*, and Paul Rainbow's *Johannine Theology* comprise this category.⁴ These works bear significance on this thesis in that they address the theological nature of the FG, 1-3 John, and Revelation, while examining texts relevant to this thesis. Familiarity with these works enables this thesis to be set in the wider theological framework of the FG and the Johannine corpus.

Rainbow synthesizes major themes from Johannine literature, treating theological subjects topically and exegetically. *Johannine Theology* addresses the topic of "The Community of Christ's Disciples in the World," but does not speak to John's use of Exodus 12:1-17:7 to show that Jesus is YHWH. Köstenberger has given the most thorough

³ Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005); George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1993); Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986); Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007); Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008).

⁴ Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciples* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007); Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009); Gerry Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, SNTS Monograph Series 162 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity in John's Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 24 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008); Paul A. Rainbow, *Johannine Theology: The Gospel, The Epistles and the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014).

analysis of Johannine theology within a single volume. His treatment of John's symbolism, the nature of the triune God, the Jewish feasts in relationship to Jesus, John's use of Scripture, the Messiah, and the deity of Christ provide for a wealth of information and theological considerations; however, Köstenberger is not concerned with exegeting John 5:45-7:52 in light of Exodus 12:1-17:7 to demonstrate that Jesus is YHWH of the Exodus writings.

In *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, Bauckham explores the theme of holiness in the Gospel of John. In his chapter "The Holiness of Jesus and His Disciples," Bauckham looks at subjects such as purity, Hanukkah, the altar, and ecclesiology as they relate to holiness and Jesus. With the exception of "The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple," the other volumes surveyed treat the holiness of Jesus indirectly by examining his identity and works, but not by specifically exploring what it means for Jesus to be holy. Bauckham's strength is in treating holiness itself in its relationship to Jesus, which provides definitional material about what it means that Jesus is holy. Yet, these authors do not argue that Jesus is YHWH by virtue of the FG's use of Exodus 12:1-17:7 as a pattern for John 5-7.

Christology

The Christology of John is exceedingly high. The works that follow do not share the intent of this thesis, but they do assess the exalted Christology of the FG and demonstrate how it is that Jewish authors made divine claims about Jesus, especially considering OT monotheism. They are relevant to the claim of this thesis by way of their Christological framework and methodological approach. Three volumes are considered as conversation partners regarding the interpretive methodology of NT authors, especially their portrayal of Jesus in relationship to the God of Israel's Scriptures. In particular, Paul

Coxon's *Exploring the New Exodus in John* deals directly with the Exodus motif in the FG and thus has special relevance to this work.⁵

In *Exploring the New Exodus in John*, Coxon uses the first part of his book to offer a methodological, historical, ideological, theological/Christological, and literary rationale for seeing the Exodus motif in John. The second section is an exegetical examination of Exodus features in John 5–10. In the chapters relevant to this thesis (those pertaining to 5:1–7:52), Coxon addresses the Sabbath healing of chapter 5, the Paschal departure of chapter 6, and the Feast of Tabernacles in chapters 7–8. His analysis of these chapters is substantial, keen, and inciteful, arguing that a “Paschal-New exodus motif”⁶ is a major interpretative key to understanding John's Gospel and the person of Jesus. He interacts with the Exodus related themes from various portions of the OT, demonstrating its past and future significance for the people of God. Yet, he does not address the narrative pattern of Exodus 12:1-17:7 as influencing the Evangelist's narrative in John 5–7, nor does he show how the title “Holy One of God” identifies Jesus as YHWH of Moses' Exodus writings.

Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the God of Israel* proposes that the identity of God, as reflected in early Jewish writings, is the best category for thinking about who God is, rather than focusing on what “deity” is.⁷ Bauckham shows that early Judaism distinguished absolutely the God who is one, from all other things.⁸ Israel's God was the God of life-giving words and mighty works, the creator, and the savior. Approaching the deity of Jesus from this direction enables present day readers to better understand how “early Christians included Jesus . . . within the unique identity of the one true God of

⁵ Paul S. Coxon, *Exploring the New Exodus in John: A Biblical Theological Investigation of John Chapters 5-10* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2014).

⁶ Coxon, *Exploring the New Exodus in John*, ix.

⁷ Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament's Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008).

⁸ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, ix.

Israel.”⁹ Jesus did what God did and spoke as God spoke. He was understood to be included in God’s identity because he participated in the same divine characteristics.

High Christology, Bauckham asserts, is the Christology of the Gospels and other NT writings, not a later invention. By the logic of the FG, to say that Jesus is God is also to say that God is revealed in Jesus; he is God, and truly makes God known to man by taking to himself human flesh (1:1-18). Jesus’ mighty works and words identify him as God, and in Jesus God is revealed (1:18). His identity is consistent with the God of Israel, though it is quite “surprising.”¹⁰ Jesus is both the Holy One and the Holy One of God; he is holy God in human flesh, the Messianic man who accomplishes God’s holy will.

Differing from Bauckham in methodology and scope, but in unison with his conclusions, Larry Hurtado in *Lord Jesus Christ* offers an encyclopedic treatment of the first two centuries of the church’s high view of Jesus.¹¹ Indeed, Hurtado agrees with Bauckham, asserting that from the beginning Christians worshiped Jesus as divine, while remaining resolute monotheists.¹² For the purposes of this thesis, “Lord Jesus Christ” is relevant for its treatment of John’s exalted view of Jesus and unequivocal monotheism. At the risk of oversimplification, Hurtado posits that the OT intermediaries who bore divine qualities, though themselves not divine, prepared NT writers to recognize Jesus as truly God.

In *Reading Backwards*, Richard B. Hays analyzes four of the “narrative representation(s)” of Jesus in the Gospels, paying special attention to how the Gospel writers understand the OT, and how the Hebrew Bible (HB) prefigures and informs the

⁹ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, ix.

¹⁰ Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, x.

¹¹ Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003).

¹² Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 3.

person and work of Jesus in the Gospels.¹³ According to Hays, in a “figural interpretation,” the Evangelist affirms the original meaning of the OT passage and also understands the OT text(s) to have consequence beyond itself.¹⁴ The value of Hays’ work is in how he analyzes each Gospel’s presentation of the divine Jesus through its appropriation of OT passages.

Two volumes on Christology proper will be consulted sparingly in relationship to their conceptual framework of the deity and humanity of Christ. *God the Incarnate Son: The Doctrine of Christ* by Stephen J. Wellum gives attention to the Christological features of John 5–7, showing their importance and relationship to the doctrine of Christ.¹⁵ In addition, *The Person of Christ* by Donald MacLeod gives some attention to Christology in John, but like Wellum, John 6:69 and Exodus 12:1-17:7 are unaddressed as to how they relate to each other in the FG’s Christological assertions.¹⁶

Theology of Holiness

Several treatises on holiness are consulted in this thesis. David Peterson’s *Possessed by God: A New Testament Doctrine of Sanctification and Holiness* contributes to this work by advancing a definition of holiness from the NT in view of its OT roots, including some attention given to John’s Gospel.¹⁷ Rather than defining holiness primarily as a process, Peterson reminds the reader that holiness is a state of being whereby someone

¹³ Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014).

¹⁴ Hays, *Reading Backwards*, x, xv.

¹⁵ Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate: The Doctrine of Christ*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

¹⁶ Donald MacLeod, *The Person of Christ*, Contours in Christian Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998).

¹⁷ David Peterson, *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995).

or something is separate and distinct from others.¹⁸ His work helps to fill in the backdrop against which Peter calls Jesus the “Holy One of God.” In this strain are Daniel I. Block’s chapters entitled “The Object of Worship” and “The Subject of Worship” in *For the Glory of God*.¹⁹ In these chapters, Block concentrates on the holy nature of God who deserves worship—the object of worship; and then turns his attention to who and how one is to worship God—the subject of worship. I include these chapters for their value in assessing the holiness of God and the nature of holiness itself in connection to worship.

Commentaries

Commentaries on John’s Gospel include George Beasley-Murray’s *John*, D. A. Carson’s *The Gospel According to John*, Leon Morris’ *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, Francis J. Moloney’s *The Gospel of John*, Gary M. Burge’s *John*, Herman Ridderbos’ *The Gospel of John*, C. K. Barrett’s *The Gospel According to St John*, Raymond E. Brown’s, *The Gospel According to John*, and F. F. Bruce’s *The Gospel of John*.²⁰ The exegesis and theological conclusions of these authors prove significant to my proposal because of their analysis of the text in question and the surrounding contexts. Commentaries by nature seek to explain the text and demonstrate how these texts relate to and advance the overall message and purpose of the biblical author. These works provide a thorough treatment of the relevant texts, and where noted by the commentator, show correspondence with Exodus themes. Murray J. Harris’ *John* differs from the commentaries above by

¹⁸ Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 17, 20.

¹⁹ Daniel I. Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering a Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014).

²⁰ George Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987); D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991); Leon Morris, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971); Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, Sacra Pagina 4 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998); Gary M. Burge, *John*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000); Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997); C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John* (London: SPCK, 1962); Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, Anchor Bible, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966); F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994).

providing a detailed analysis of the Greek grammar and syntax, while omitting much of what typical commentaries cover.²¹

OT Commentaries on Exodus include T. Desmond Alexander's *Exodus* in the Apollos Old Testament Series, Duane Garrett's *A Commentary on Exodus*, and Doug Stuart's *Exodus*.²² Stuart's exegesis is less detailed, but his strength is found in the narrative analysis and overall summary of the relevant passages in the context of Exodus as a whole. Commentaries on Deuteronomy include Peter C. Craigie's *The Book of Deuteronomy*, and J. G. McConville's *Deuteronomy*.²³

Void in the Literature

While there is a wealth of literature on the text and themes of the FG, none to my knowledge argue that John identifies Jesus as YHWH of the Exodus writings by the title, "Holy One of God," nor do they claim that the Evangelist uses the overall narrative structure of Exodus 12:1-17:7 as a theological background for John 5–7. The sources surveyed make valuable contributions to Johannine scholarship by way of theological summaries, analyses, and explanations of the texts. They shed light on the themes, imagery, structure, and theology of the FG. Nevertheless, there is a void in the literature concerning John's presentation of the Holy One of God in chapters 5–7 in its correspondence with Exodus 12:1-17:7. The literature simply does not assert that the title "the Holy One of God" identifies Jesus as YHWH of the Exodus writings, and the one consecrated to give eternal life. Therefore, this thesis has addressed the gap in scholarship by (1) analyzing

²¹ Murray J. Harris, *John*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2015).

²² T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017); Duane Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013); Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, New American Commentary, vol. 2 (Nashville: B & H, 2006).

²³ Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976); J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002).

the relevant texts in John in consideration of the book's structure and overall message; (2) examining the correspondence of 5:1–7:52 with Exodus 12:1–17:7, and exploring the shared themes found in those passages; (4) demonstrating how the FG understands Moses to write of the Messiah; and (5) assessing Peter's confession of Jesus as "the Holy One of God" in 6:69 and Jesus' call to the thirsty in 7:37-39. In addition to the analysis of the primary literature, this thesis will consult and interact with various secondary sources in the process of exegesis and theological consideration.

Thesis

This thesis argues that, by hailing Jesus as the Holy One of God in 6:69, the FG identifies Jesus as YHWH of Moses' Exodus writings, and the one consecrated to give eternal life. In other words, the title, "Holy One of God," affirms Jesus' deity and humanity; he is the Christ and the incarnate Son of God (20:30-31). Moreover, Peter's confession identifies Jesus with YHWH, the God of Israel, who came "down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians" (Exod 3:8; cf. John 6:38, 50). I defend this thesis by demonstrating that the FG retells salvific events of the Exodus, especially Exodus 12:1–17:7 in John 5:1–7:52 in light of Jesus Christ, proclaiming him as YHWH, and as the Christ. The title "Holy One of God" refers to YHWH and the one consecrated to do his holy will. Furthermore, I argue that Jesus identifies himself with YHWH of the Exodus by his call to the thirsty in 7:37-39. While I reference other passages in support of my argument, the focus of analysis is confined to John 5:1–7:52, with 6:69 and 7:37-39 receiving detailed examination.

CHAPTER 2

HE WROTE OF ME

A major theme in the FG is the Son's unique relationship to the Father. To establish Jesus' utter uniqueness, that is his holiness, the Evangelist calls upon several witnesses to testify to the only Son from the Father. The ultimate and unparalleled witness to the incarnate Son is the Father (5:32, 37). In addition, John calls the prophet Moses to bear witness to the Messiah through his authoritative writings (5:45-46). Moses and his canonical witness stand behind John's Gospel in a conspicuous way, having pointed forward to the person and work of the one full of grace and truth (1:16-17).

Chapter 2 demonstrates that John presents Jesus as the Messiah of whom Moses wrote, while asserting the utter uniqueness of the Holy One of God. This point is argued by examining the Prophet like Moses theme in 5:1-7:52 in its Exodus-Deuteronomy correspondence, and by showing that John understands Moses to write of the Messiah typologically and prophetically. This chapter, therefore, will establish that Jesus is the Prophet like Moses of whom Moses wrote, while upholding the holiness of the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father (1:18).

Moses Wrote of the Messiah

The FG records the words and works of Jesus against the backdrop of the Exodus writings. From the beginning of his Gospel, John has placed Moses as an indispensable figure in understanding the person and work of the Word made flesh. In doing so, John demonstrates that Moses wrote of Jesus in at least two ways: typologically and prophetically. The FG understands Moses to have written of the Messiah by way of typology. That is, John narrates selected gospel events as the fulfilment of certain Exodus events, persons, and institutions which correspond with and prophetically point forward

to the Christ.¹ Furthermore, the Evangelist employs structural parallels from the wilderness writings to show how Jesus is the Messiah. As the antitype, Jesus Christ fulfills and surpasses the types recorded in the wilderness writings.² Another way to describe the FG's interpretation of Moses' writings is to say that Moses wrote "paradigmatically" of the Messiah. In this way the Exodus writings set forth a set of "assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them."³ Through the prism of this Exodus paradigm, the Messiah was to be recognized by his own (cf. 1:9-13).

While John's use of Exodus themes can rightly be considered typology, I will argue that the FG is doing more than showing that Jesus fulfills typological expectations. By using an Exodus paradigm, John demonstrates that Moses wrote of the Messiah while recounting the most significant salvific act in Old Testament history: the Exodus from Egypt. Therefore, the Evangelist narrates Jesus' ministry in the contexts of the Jewish Feasts established in the Law of Moses. Moreover, Jesus performed identity signaling "signs" reminiscent of Moses' signs during the Exodus deliverance, signs designed to reveal YHWH to both his enemies and his people (Exod 7:17; 8:9-11, 20-22; 9:14, 29; 10:1-2; 11:4-7; cf. John 20:30-31). Thus, the FG retells Exodus-like events with a similar sequence in view of Jesus. These events led the twelve to acknowledge him as the Holy One of God in 6:69, and eventually culminate in Jesus being worship as "Lord" and "God" (20:28). The significance of the Exodus for Israel and the apostles does not escape R. E. Watts, who notes,

As the preeminent saving event in their history (Deut 4:32-40), the exodus profoundly shaped Israel's social structures, calendars, remembrance of the nation's past, and

¹ See William W. Klein, C. L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard, *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 1993), 29; and Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2006), 21-22, 34.

² Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple*, 34.

³ *The American Heritage College Dictionary*, 4th ed (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), s.v. "paradigmatically."

hopes of future restoration. Because of their conviction that Jesus fulfills Israel's destiny, the NT authors couch their works in exodus language, albeit on a cosmic scale and with reference to all peoples.⁴

In addition, the Evangelist understands Moses to write of the Messiah specifically, that is, prophetically. As the prototype prophet, Moses prophetically promised and wrote of a specific prophet to come, one who would speak God's words and perform God's mighty works. These mighty works, or signs, would confirm the prophet's divine message, verify his divine commission, and authenticate his identity as the one who speaks for YHWH. Jesus is the Prophet-Messiah who is the ultimate fulfillment of Deuteronomy 18:15-19.

Moses Wrote Typologically of the Messiah

Setting aside allusions the Evangelist makes to Moses' writings in chapter 1, such as the creation narrative of Genesis 1-2 (1:1-5), God's children in Deuteronomy 32:5 (1:12; cf. 11:51-52), the tabernacle, tent of meeting, and glory of YHWH in Exodus and Numbers (1:14, 18), and the gateway of heaven in Gen 28:10-22 (1:51), John explicitly mentions Moses in 1:17. He is mentioned again in 1:45 when Philip explains to Nathanael that they "have found the one of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote."⁵

The mosaic references in the FG are significant. They reveal the Evangelist's own understanding of the Scriptures, as well as the views of his fellow Jews concerning Moses and the Messiah. While differing and sometimes competing opinions were held in first-century Palestine (cf. 6:14-15; 7:40-42, 52; 8:28-29), the views expressed in the FG all agree that "Moses in the Law . . . wrote" of the Messiah (1:45).

⁴ R. E. Watts, "Exodus," in *The New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 478.

⁵ George Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 24; D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 143; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 307; and Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 64-65, understand "the prophet" to refer to the prophet like Moses spoken of in Deut 18:15-18, which was a common interpretation in the first century.

Apart from the references to purification rituals (2:6), Passover (2:13, 23), and the sign-manifestation of divine glory (2:11), all finding their roots in the Law of Moses, there are no explicit references to Moses in John 2. Yet, Moses is not missing for long. In 3:14 Moses, “lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” which is analogous to the Son of Man being lifted up to give eternal life (Num 21:9). The beloved disciple concludes the chapter by reflecting on the truth that the Son of Man is above all because he comes from above (3:31). He is the one uniquely loved by the Father and sent (ἀπέστειλεν) by the Father to utter the very words of God (3:31, 34). In the book of Exodus, YHWH sent (ἀποστείλω, LXX) Moses to save and speak on his behalf (Exod 3-10; especially 3:10-15). As Israel was to listen to Moses, John expects Israel to listen to Jesus because he was sent by the Father and speaks the words of God. Therefore, John 3 concludes with the admonition to believe and not rebel against the divine word of the sent Son (3:17, 36).

Chapter 4 completes the Cana Cycle (2:1-4:54)⁶ by presenting Jesus as the life-giving Messiah and the prophet who is greater than Jacob (4:12-14, 25-26, 36, 44, 53). Furthermore, like the honor-withholding Israelites led by Moses, the Galileans give no honor to Jesus (4:44). Jesus is greater than Jacob because he gives the salvation-water of eternal life; he then signified the veracity of his promise by giving life to a dying boy (4:10-14, 50-54). John again brings the prophet theme to bear on these events, showing that the Samaritans understood the Messiah to be the Prophet like Moses (4:19, 25-26).⁷

The Evangelist has placed several references and allusions to Moses in chapters 1–4 to provide a point of comparison and contrast with Jesus. By doing so John establishes a revelatory trajectory that moves through the wilderness writings and comes to fruition in the incarnation of the Holy One of God. Jesus is both the prophet like Moses and the prophet superior to Moses; he is the divine Son of God. What follows is an examination

⁶ See Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 179.

⁷ See Carson’s explanation of the Samaritan Messianic expectations, in *The Gospel According to John*, 221.

of the Prophet like Moses theme in 5:1-7:52, its Exodus-Deuteronomy correspondence, and its fulfillment in the Holy One of God. In analyzing these texts, this chapter argues that Jesus is the Prophet like Moses of whom Moses wrote.

John's Feast Settings

The feast settings of John 5–7 provide an Exodus background for all Jesus said and did. Under the Mosaic Covenant, all Jewish males were commanded to appear before YHWH three times per year (Exod 23:14-19; Lev 23.1-41). On each occasion they were to keep a feast to YHWH, which included sacrifices. These feasts of the Jews were the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which included the Passover), the Feast of Harvest (also called Pentecost or Weeks), and the Feast of Tabernacles (also called Ingathering). The feasts, like the Sabbath, provide a historical reference point and a rich theological setting for significant moments in the ministry of Jesus. A “feast of the Jews” (5:1), the “Passover” (6:4), and the “Feast of Tabernacles” (7:2) are of particular interest to this thesis. The FG contains 68 percent of the NT’s use of the term “feast” (ἑορτή), which the Evangelist uses 17 times.⁸ Moreover, “Passover” (πάσχα) occurs 10 times in John out of its 19 occurrences in the NT; and only in 7:2 does the “Feast of Tabernacles” (σκηνοπηγία) occur in the NT writings.⁹ John’s introduction of events by these feast references calls to mind their Exodus source and significance, while he recounts the words and works of Jesus in their light. Understanding the extra-canonical developments of these commemorations, especially the Feast of Tabernacles, will shed light on the import of Jesus’ claims and actions during the events.

The “feast” in John 5:1. It is not clear what feast John refers to in 5:1. Herman Ridderbos believes that “the character of the feast remains obscure throughout the story

⁸ Gerry Wheaton, *The Role of the Jewish Feasts in John’s Gospel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1.

⁹ Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John’s Gospel*, 1.

and all efforts to identify it and establish a material connection between the feast and the story lack a solid foundation.”¹⁰ Paul Coxen also dismisses the attempts to identify the feast, arguing that the focus of the episode is the Sabbath, “which has taken on the festal motif.”¹¹ Contrary to these and others, Gary Burge cites 5:9 and argues that the festival mentioned in 5:1 is a Sabbath feast.¹² He argues that this fits the context of the passage where Jesus is speaking and acting contrary to “rabbinic expectations of behavior and piety on the Sabbath.”¹³

Considering the text’s emphasis, it seems best to understand the “feast of the Jews” in 5:1 to be the Sabbath day of one of the three major feasts (cf. 5:9). This accords with the latitude given by the FG in 5:1, “a feast,” while also maintaining the theological and salvation-historical emphasis of the Sabbath as a feast day set apart by YHWH in Leviticus 23:1-3. Though it appears fruitless to speculate about which of the three major feasts this Sabbath is situated in, its mention is important for several reasons. First, the feast moves the narrative along, bringing Jesus out of Galilee (4:46, 54), thus ending that section of the Gospel, and it brings Jesus into the heart of Jerusalem for the “Festival Cycle” of chapters 5–10.¹⁴ Second, the feast reference signals to the audience, especially after a second hearing or reading, the atmosphere of religious fervor and the remembrances, celebrations, and expectations intentionally in view during these Exodus-oriented festivals. A salvation-historical sensitivity is infused in the setting and holds sway over chapters 5–10. Recognizing this trajectory is essential to understanding the Sabbath work and words of the Christ. Third, the feast reference is a historical marker which is characteristic of the

¹⁰ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 184.

¹¹ Paul S. Coxen, *Exploring the New Exodus in John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2014), 99.

¹² Gary M. Burge, *John*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 171.

¹³ Burge, *John*, 171.

¹⁴ Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, 206, 413.

FG's eyewitness testimony. In addition, this testimony serves to advance its theological agenda of faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (20:31).

The Passover Feast. The Passover is first mentioned in 2:13. It occurs again in 2:23; 6:4; 11:55; 12:1; and 13:1. The Passover was instituted in Exodus 12:1-51 as a commemoration of YHWH's passing over the Israelites in Egypt, sparing the lives of firstborn male Jews and striking down the firstborn males of Egypt (Exod 12:12-13, 26-27). This feast marked Israel's salvation—their protection from the messenger of death and their Exodus from Egypt's slavery by the smeared blood of a slaughtered lamb (Exod 12:3-7, 12-13, 42, 51). The "flesh" of the Passover lamb was to be eaten, all of it, as Israel prepared for God's coming deliverance (Exod 12:8-11). The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated in tandem with the Passover, "that the law of YHWH" would remain in the people's mouths and his salvation always before their minds (Exod 13:3-9). YHWH gives further instructions concerning the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread in Leviticus 23:4-8.

The Passover plays a significant role in Jesus' interaction with the Jews in 6:22-59, which will become clear in the discussion of the Exodus pattern of events and the Bread of Life discourse. For now, it is important to note that the atmosphere in which Jesus acts and speaks sets the reader and hearer of John's Gospel in an Exodus-infused environment. Jesus' claims and signs have salvation-historical significance, as well as implications for those who hear him. As Coxen notes, "it is against the background of the feasts that Jesus performs his signs. These are creative acts that signal the coming of God among his people to lead them out of bondage that they might follow him in a New Exodus that leads to a new creation."¹⁵ This is especially true given the significance of the Passover.

¹⁵ Coxen, *Exploring the New Exodus in John*, 95.

The Feast of Tabernacles. Tabernacles commemorated YHWH's Exodus salvation and his provision during the wilderness travel to the promised land. On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the feast began with a "holy convocation" and was celebrated for a total of eight days (Lev 23:34-36). Twice in Leviticus 23:35-36 it is mentioned that no work is to be done. In joy, the pilgrims were to gather leafy branches and assemble "booths" or "tabernacles" to live in for seven days. This part of the feast signified YHWH's provision in the wilderness when he "made the people of Israel dwell in booths when [he] brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev 23:40-43). Accordingly, this feast was formative for the nation, and annually called them to remember God's Exodus provision in the wilderness. In the years that followed the Exodus from Egypt, the Feast of Tabernacles developed prophetically, not only emphasizing YHWH's provision in the Exodus but anticipating a new Exodus in which life-giving water would flow into the wilderness from the Temple's altar (Zech 14:8, 16-21; see Isa 43:19-21; 55:1; Ezek 47:1-12). Given the theological import of these feasts, it is no wonder that the purpose of the Exodus can twice be described as Israel's release from Egypt in order to "hold a feast to the LORD" (Exod 10:9; 5:1).

John's Pattern of Exodus Events

The FG retells Exodus events with regard to Jesus, the Prophet-Messiah, who is YHWH of Moses' Exodus writings. Scholars have recognized the use of the Exodus in the structure of John, yet they often arrive at different conclusions as to how the FG uses the Exodus structurally. Jacob Enz proposes that the book of Exodus is a literary pattern for John, and he sees a "general sequence" in the Exodus that the Evangelist uses. Enz notes that the word *sign* reoccurs in the first part of both books, whereas the latter part of both works address the "Lord's own," the placement of the intercessory prayers of Moses and Jesus, and the completed work of Moses and Jesus are emphasized at the conclusion of

the narratives.¹⁶ Enz also seeks to identify “a number of parallels between Exodus and the Prologue of John,” which include the use of “glory,” the “manifestation of God,” and covenantal language.¹⁷

Robert Smith argues that any recognition of a typological structure should sufficiently account “for all of the materials in the units which are being compared, either by putting everything into parallel or by reasonably justifying the omission of any sizable amount of material which does not fit the scheme.”¹⁸ In addition, structural typology “must be compatible with the theology of the work in which it is used” and “contribute to the argument of the work.”¹⁹ With these ground rules in play, Smith sees Exodus 2–12 as fertile ground for parallels and patterns in the FG.²⁰ He especially correlates the specific signs of the Exodus in Exodus 2–12 with Jesus’ signs in John 2–12 in a one-to-one correspondence; yet, he is unable to account for every Exodus sign in this scheme.²¹

While general parallels between the FG and the Exodus are recognized by many, this thesis proposes a tight, typological correspondence of events in John 1:1–7:52 with Exodus 1:1–17:7, which accounts for the major events of the Exodus and their theological import. Although the Evangelist does not replicate everything that transpires in Exodus 1–17, table 1 demonstrates that there is a clear correlation between the events

¹⁶ Jacob J. Enz, “The Book of Exodus as a Literary Type for the Gospel of John,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76, no. 3 (1957): 310-11.

¹⁷ Enz, “The Book of Exodus,” 211-12.

¹⁸ Robert Houston Smith, “Exodus Typology in the Fourth Gospel,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 81, no. 4 (1962): 332.

¹⁹ Smith, “Exodus Typology,” 332.

²⁰ Smith, “Exodus Typology,” 333.

²¹ Smith, “Exodus Typology,” 338. Cf. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple*, 32, for a brief analysis of these proposals.

of Exodus 1–17 and the events of John 1–7.²² With this correspondence in the background, I will seek to demonstrate how Moses wrote of the Messiah.

Table 1. Narrative comparison of Exodus 1–17 with John 1–7

Exodus	John
Exod 1: YHWH’s faithfulness, Israel’s sons, & Israel’s bondage.	John 1:1-13: The Word of life-giving light, Israel’s darkness & children of God.
Exod 2: Moses’ birth & flight; YHWH’s covenant remembrance.	John 1:14-17: Incarnation of the Word & covenant remembrance.
Exod 3: YHWH’s self-revelation to Moses, the subsequent consecration & commissioning of Moses.	John 1:18: The incarnate Son’s commission to reveal the unseen God.
Exod 4-11: Moses comes to Egypt, speaking YHWH’s words & performing YHWH’s sign-works; Pharaoh & Israel refuse to hear and obey YHWH.	John 1:19-4:54: The incarnate Word comes to Israel, revealing divine glory through his words & sign-works John 5:1-47: Jewish feast setting; the Son speaks the Father’s words & performs his sign-works on the Sabbath; the Jews refuse to hear, believe, & obey the divine Son.
Exod 12: Passover & Exodus.	John 6:1-4: The setting of Passover & Feast of Unleavened Bread.
Exod 13: Consecration of first born & Feast of Unleavened Bread.	John 6:5-15: The Son’s sign-work of providing abundant bread & fish for Israel during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.
Exod 14-15: Water miracle of the sea crossing (cf. Ps. 106:9); song of YHWH’s salvation; water miracle of the bitter water made sweet, YHWH as “Healer” and twelve springs of water with seventy palms.	John 6:16-21: Water miracle of the sea crossing & the I Am’s salvation of the twelve.
Exod 16: Grumbling against Moses & YHWH, bread from heaven, & sabbath rest provided.	John 6:22-59: Bread of heaven & flesh-blood discourse, the command to not labor but believe, grumbling against the Son of Man.
Exod 17:1-7: Israel thirsts, YHWH accused of abandonment, Moses is also accused; YHWH provides water from the stricken wilderness rock, upon which He stands.	John 6:60-7:52: The Holy One of God provides food and drink but is abandoned; as the Rock of living water Jesus offers himself to the thirsty but is rejected, and he is opposed during the Feast of Tabernacles.

The setting of chapter 5 is the Jerusalem temple during “a feast of the Jews,” at which time Jesus healed a man lame from birth (5:1-9). In seeming contradiction to the

²² The focus of this thesis is John 5–7. I have therefore confined the observations to John 1–7, showing that the correspondence in John 5–7 is not coincidental, but intentional.

Law of Moses, the reader finds Jesus working and the lame walking with his bed on the Sabbath (5:10-11). Jesus then provokes the Jews by his restoration work with the Father, his coequal coworker; therefore, they “seek all the more to kill him” (5:16-18a). Clearly, by calling God his Father and doing the works of God with God, Jesus is understood to be “making himself equal with God” (5:18b), an accusation that will follow him throughout his Jerusalem ministry (8:53, 59; 10:33). In fact, Jesus so identifies himself with the Father that he can confidently claim the divine prerogatives of judgment, resurrection life, and shared heavenly honor (5:19-23; cf. 17:1). If these claims to deity were not staggering enough, the Son of Man asserts that the Father is complicit in his redemptive work and words (5:22-23, 26-27).

The Evangelist concludes chapter 5 by showing the ironic hypocrisy of the Jews. They search the Scriptures of the OT for life yet miss the Messiah to whom they bear witness (5:39); but it is more than merely missing the Messiah that testifies to their blindness. They have exchanged the glory of God for the glory of his creatures (5:44; cf. Rom 1:23). How can they see and believe when they prioritize the praise of men and forsake the glory of the only God (5:44)? In the face of this rejection, Jesus claims that Moses wrote of him and indicts the religious leaders for refusing to trust the Scriptures and his testimony (5:46). For Jesus and the FG, Moses’ “writings” (γράμματα) collectively speak of the Messiah and stand as an authoritative witness against the murderous intent and wholesale unbelief of the Jews (5:47).

The sign of Sabbath healing in 5:1-9, like the other signs in John’s Gospel, bears witness to Jesus’ identity and authority. This is made clear by the discussion that continues in this section. Jesus heals by commanding the invalid to “get up.” He follows this with another command: “Take up your bed, and walk” (5:8). This last command causes such a stir among the Sabbath-keeping Jews that they are blind to the healing miracle. Who, they wonder, would command this man to carry his mat on the Sabbath (v. 12)? Much like the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12, the healing reveals Jesus’

authority and identity. The Jews understand Jesus to be claiming divine authority, the very prerogative of God to supersede the law of Moses. Jesus explains his authority and identity in 5:19-47 in response to their challenge. Moreover, this “feast of the Jews,” when seen through the lenses of the Sabbath, Passover, Feast of Tabernacles, the signs, teaching, and pronouncements of Jesus, commences the author’s emphasis on how Jesus fulfills and transcends the first Exodus.

John purposely records Jesus’ signs so that his audience will believe he is the Messiah, the Son of God (20:31). The signs signal his authority and identity as the Christ, who is also the Son of God, and they call for the response of saving faith. This purpose of the signs is reminiscent of Exodus 4:1–17. Moses doubts that Israel will listen to his voice as he speaks God’s word of deliverance; they will not believe that YHWH appeared to him and commissioned him to lead them out of slavery (Exod 4:1). YHWH shows Moses several signs that he will do so that Israel will believe he has come from YHWH, and so they will listen to his authoritative voice (Exod 4:2-17). Just as Moses will work the mighty works of God in Exodus 7–12, signifying his God-given authority and identifying him as God’s prophet (cf. Deut 18:21-22; 34:10-12), so too Jesus’ signs point to his authority and identity as the Prophet-Messiah, the Holy One of God (6:69).

Chapter 6 echoes at least three events from Exodus 12–16: the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exod 12–13), salvation through the sea (Exod 14–15), and the bread from heaven (Exod 16). In 6:4 the author notes, “Now the Passover, the Feast of the Jews, was at hand.” The Passover and the Feast that followed are the historical and theological setting for the feeding miracle, the sea crossing, and Jesus’ “I Am” pronouncement. As George Beasley-Murray observes, “The statement as to the nearness of the Passover (v. 4), the identification of Jesus as the prophet who should come (cf. Deut 18:15), and the discussion of the bread from heaven within the discourse (vv. 31-33) combine to indicate that the feeding miracle is understood as falling within the fulfilment

of the hope of a second Exodus.”²³ The Passover setting recalls the Exodus event and prepares the reader for what is to follow in chapters 6–7.

Moses Wrote Prophetically of the Messiah

With the Passover as the background, Jesus miraculously feeds thousands by multiplying five loaves and two fish (6:11). The mass feeding causes the people to declare that Jesus is “the Prophet who is to come into the world” (v. 14). The crowd then acts on their profession and attempts to make Jesus their messianic king (6:15). D. A. Carson believes that no one text, such as Deuteronomy 18:15-19, is in view at 5:46, but that “it is perhaps more likely that this verse is referring to a certain *way* of reading the books of Moses . . . than to a specific passage.”²⁴ While this is certainly true, Moses clearly predicts that in the future YHWH will raise up a prophet from among his people who will be like him. John understands this prophecy to be fulfilled in Jesus. The FG demonstrates this understanding by the multiple references to “the Prophet” (1:21, 25; 6:14; 7:40), the repeated statement that Moses “wrote” of one to come (1:45; 5:46), and by the assertion that Jesus Christ is the eternal and incarnate “word” of the Father (1:1-2, 14, 18). Jesus is the eschatological prophet who is in himself God’s own final and climactic message (cf. Heb 1:1-2). At least then, John, along with many of his Jewish contemporaries, understood Deuteronomy 18:15-19 to be one clear place in which Moses writes specifically and prophetically of the Messiah.

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 and Exodus 1:1–7:30. In Deuteronomy 18:15-19, Moses tells the people of Israel that YHWH will speak to them through a God-sent mediator, an Israelite prophet who has the very words of God in his mouth:

The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen—just as you desired of the LORD your

²³ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 88.

²⁴ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 266. Cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 79; Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 207.

God at Horeb on the day of the assembly, when you said, “Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God or see this great fire anymore, lest I die.” And the LORD said to me, “They are right in what they have spoken. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.”

Deuteronomy 18:15-19 states two reasons why God will give the people of Israel a prophet like Moses. First, there will be a temptation to hear from YHWH like the surrounding nations presume to hear from their deities. These nations sought to manipulate their gods into giving them a favorable word through their abominable practices. As Deuteronomy 18:9-14 states,

When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominable practices of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer or a medium or a necromancer or one who inquires of the dead, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD. And because of these abominations the LORD your God is driving them out before you. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God, for these nations, which you are about to dispossess, listen to fortune-tellers and to diviners. But as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do this.

At that point in Israel’s history there was an immediate need to hear God’s prophetic word, and there was an impending threat to hearing YHWH speak. A mediator, not pagan manipulation, was needed.

Second, YHWH will send a prophet because the people of Israel could not bear to “hear” the thunderous voice of YHWH or “see” the fiery manifestation of his glory at Horeb. They cried out for a mediating prophet: “Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God . . . lest I die” (Deut 18:16). To this YHWH agreed, saying, “They are right in what they have spoken” (Deut 18:17). The people of Israel needed someone to mediate God’s glorious presence and powerful word. They could not hear YHWH or see him anymore, lest they die (Deut 18:16b). His magnificent glory and his overpowering voice conveyed to the people that YHWH is holy and cannot be accessed without a mediator.

Speaking for YHWH, Moses gives two qualifications for the prophet who is to come: YHWH will raise him up and he will be an Israelite. First, in verses 15 and 18 it is stated that YHWH will raise up an Israelite prophet. “The LORD your God will raise up

for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers” (v. 15). YHWH will emphatically not speak to his people through any of the abominable means mentioned in verses 9-14. The Gentiles and their damnable practices are fundamentally tainted, profane, and unreliable. Part and parcel with their idolatrous pursuits of a divine word are their repugnant sacrifices, child sacrifice being most offensive in the sight of YHWH (v. 10).

The second qualification comes from the same set of verses, the prophet’s coming forth is YHWH’s doing; he will “raise up” his spokesman. J. G. McConville draws a comparison and a contrast here with the priests and kings of Israel. Like the priests and kings, the prophet must be an Israelite, but unlike with these offices, there is no ceremony in which the people of Israel anoint the prophet.²⁵ His coming forth is the work of God alone; and through the prophet that YHWH will raise up, God will continue to reveal his word to his people. The words spoken by the prophet are the very words of YHWH, which he alone will put into his mouth. The stated demand in verses 15 and 19 is that “to him you shall listen” and “whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.” The prophet speaks with divine authority and must be heard and heeded. Thus, the prophet is raised up by YHWH to speak his words, on his behalf, in his authority, so that YHWH’s people will hear and obey him. The prophetic function of the Prophet like Moses is to mediate YHWH to the covenant people, especially by speaking his words. In measure, this will be the role of every God-sent prophet raised up after Moses, but ultimately it is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, God’s Word made flesh.²⁶

Daniel Block asserts that Deuteronomy 18:15 is in no sense Messianic. Rather, he argues that this passage addresses “the nature of true prophecy” and Moses’

²⁵ J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary Series, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 302.

²⁶ See Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), 262; and McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 302. Both understand this passage to speak to the immediate need of the people for YHWH’s prophetic word, and to the future fulfilment in Jesus Christ.

“uniqueness” among the future prophets of YHWH.²⁷ Furthermore, he notes that neither this text “nor any other First Testament text offer any support for interpreting Deuteronomy 18:14-19 messianically, either in its expectation of a singular eschatological prophetic Messiah or its anticipation of an ideal Prophet at the end of a succession of prophets.”²⁸ More forcefully, in summarizing Deuteronomy 34:10-12, Block concludes, “To claim this text as support for the view that the Torah points to a future Messiah is both gratuitous and tendentious. This image is entirely in the eye of the beholder, and represents the result of forcing evidence to suit a conclusion pre-established on other grounds.”²⁹

Yet, from John’s account of contemporary Jewish expectations and his own presentation of Jesus as the Christ of whom Moses wrote, to associate Jesus with the Prophet like Moses is neither gratuitous nor tendentious; but as demonstrated, a Messianic interpretation of the Prophet like Moses is a reasonable conclusion drawn from the FG’s witness to Jesus. In addition, Deuteronomy 34:10-12 stresses the unrivaled uniqueness of Moses as YHWH’s prophet, at least up until the epilogue was penned. YHWH knew Moses alone “face to face” (v. 10), no prophet was like Moses in regard to the “signs” which he performed (v. 11), and the mighty displays of power and awesome works that he accomplished in the sight of Israel (v. 12). Not even Joshua rivaled Moses, though he “was full of the Spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands on him,” and was obeyed by all the people (v. 9).³⁰

However, Deuteronomy 18:15 claims that a prophet like Moses would indeed be raised up by YHWH. Considering the explicit reference to Moses and the comparison and contrast made between he and the incarnate Word (1:16-17), it seems entirely

²⁷ Daniel I. Block, “A Prophet Like Moses? Who or Why?,” *The Asbury Journal* 72, no. 2 (2017): 28.

²⁸ Block, “A Prophet Like Moses?,” 29.

²⁹ Block, “A Prophet Like Moses?,” 29.

³⁰ So also James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God’s Glory in Salvation Through Judgement* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 132.

legitimate to understand Jesus to both fulfill and surpass the promised Moses-like prophet. Moreover, 1:18 continues this comparison and contrast by alluding to the unseen God of Exodus 33:20 and the relational closeness of YHWH with Moses, while heightening these realities to exalted proportions in Jesus the Messiah. Although no one can see the essential nature or “face” of YHWH and live (Exod 33:20), he spoke to Moses “face to face,” which connotes intimate knowledge and friendship (Exod 33:11; Deut 34:10). In addition, Moses is said to be unsurpassed “for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do” before Pharaoh and Israel (Deut 34:11). With Exodus 33:11, 20 in the background, the FG asserts that Jesus, “the only begotten God [μονογενῆς θεός] who is in the bosom of the Father [ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς], he only has made him known.” Whereas YHWH in some sense spoke to Moses “face to face,” revealing himself to the prophet in a way that was far superior than he had to others (Num 12:6-8), Jesus is face-to-face with the unseen God, in the very bosom of the Father (1:18). By virtue of this intimate, eternal union with his Father, he alone has made the unseen God visible, revealing the Godhead in human flesh (1:14). Moreover, as the prophet’s word comes true and the Son’s signs match and exceed those of Moses (3:2; 11:40-47; 12:18; 18:9), he reveals his glory as the incarnate God and garnishes faith in Israel (2:11, 22, 12).

The twin qualifications of Israelite identity and divine call set forth by Deuteronomy 18:15-19, are the same qualifications that Moses meets in Exodus 1–7. The first chapter of Exodus reveals the oppression of the people of Israel by the Egyptians, as well as the fruitful multiplication of Jacob’s descendants. The Abrahamic promise is coming to fruition in the throes of Egyptian slavery and Pharaoh’s attempt at infanticide—God has made of Abraham a “great nation” (Gen 12:2a). In this context, Moses is conceived and birthed into a Levite family (Exod 2:1-2). After being placed in the basket and put into the river for his protection, Pharaoh’s daughter draws Moses out of the water. Moses is a descendant of Jacob, and his “brothers” are “the people of Israel” (Exod 2:11, 25).

Chapters 1–7 make clear that YHWH raised Moses up and sent him to deliver his people. The divine initiative is seen in that Moses tried to deliver his people but failed and fled to Midian (Exod 2:11-15; cf. Acts 7:21-29). The emphasis on God’s call occurs again in Moses’ reluctance to obey the command of YHWH, even as YHWH confronts him by his presence, voice, promise, and display of power. Beginning in Exodus 3:10 and stretching through chapter 7, Moses is the one sent by YHWH. He “send[s]” Moses to Pharaoh to bring his people out of Egypt (Exod 3:10). After promising to be with him, YHWH pledges to signify that he Himself has “sent” Moses (Exod 3:12). Moses will tell the people of Israel that I AM, the God of Jacob, has “sent” him to them (Exod 3:13, 14, 15). YHWH “sent” Moses with his words to speak and his signs to do (Exod 4:28). Moses even questions YHWH’s rationale in “send[ing]” him when things seem to not work out (Exod 5:22). Finally, God tells Moses to deliver the following message to Pharaoh: “The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, ‘Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness’” (Exod 7:16). God brings Moses close to himself, sanctifies him by his holy presence at the bush, commissions him, and sends him to speak YHWH’s words and do his works, all for the glory of YHWH and the salvation of Israel (Exod 3:7-8; 14:4, 17-18). Moses is first resistant, but reluctantly obeys the command of God.

John makes at least three allusions in chapters 5-7 to the effect that Jesus is the prophet like Moses spoken of in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. The FG alludes to the Mosaic Prophet in that God raised Jesus up from among his people and sent him to Israel; Jesus mediates God’s presence by speaking his words and doing his works; and Jesus is grumbled against, rejected, and forsaken as God’s prophet. Furthermore, the Evangelist calls the reader’s attention to Moses, the Exodus narratives, and YHWH’s salvation of Israel by the selection and placement of Exodus-like events in chapters 5-7.

Jesus was sent by God. Like Moses in Exodus 1–10, God sent Jesus to his own people (1:11-12), and as the one whom God raised up, Israel must listen to him. The FG uses two terms to refer to the Father’s sending of the Son, ἀποστέλλω, occurring a total

of eighteen times in reference to Jesus, and πέμπω, which is used twenty-eight times with reference to Jesus. In general, ἀποστέλλω has the idea of “dispatch[ing] someone for the achievement of some objective.”³¹ Similarly, πέμπω means “to dispatch someone, whether human or transcendent being, usually for purposes of communication.”³² There is obvious overlap in the meaning of these words, as John makes clear in 20:21: “Therefore Jesus said to them, ‘As the Father has sent (ἀπέσταλκέν) με, even so I send (πέμπω) you.’”³³ Though BDAG recognizes nuances in the verbs, John uses them synonymously because of their overlap in meaning.

These terms find significant concentration at certain points when used in reference to the Son of God. ἀποστέλλω is used seven times in chapters 5–10 and six times in chapter 17. πέμπω is used seventeen times in chapters 5–10 and ten times in chapters 12–16. By the frequent references to the sending of the Son, the Evangelist makes it clear that God has sanctified his Son and sent him into the world to reveal the Father (1:18; 10:36) and accomplish his holy will (6:40). Though the Father sent the Son from his side (1:18), he raised up the Prophet-Messiah from among the Jews. Joseph and Mary raised Jesus and his siblings in Galilee (6:42; 7:1-3). Knowing that Jesus was one of their own, an Israelite from Galilee, the Jews grumbled against him and refused to listen to his word (6:42; 7:41). Yet, this was an essential qualification of the Mosaic prophet. Jesus’ statement in Luke 4:24, “No prophet is acceptable in his hometown,” rings true not only in Nazareth, but throughout Israel.

Jesus’ mediatorial words and works. Second, like Moses, Jesus mediates the glorious presence of YHWH by speaking God’s liberating words and performing God’s mighty works of salvation (1:16-18). YHWH calls Moses to speak to the people of Israel

³¹ Walter Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 120. [BDAG]

³² BDAG, 794.

³³ Author’s translation.

and to Pharaoh of Egypt (Exod 3:13-15; 4:12; 5:1). Initially, Moses speaks YHWH's words of promise, salvation, assurance, and judgment. He assures the Israelites that YHWH, the covenant-keeping God of their fathers, knows their burdens, will deliver and redeem them, will covenant with them as their God, and will give them the land of promise (Exod 6:5-9a). Moses also speaks God's words of judgment, commanding Pharaoh to let YHWH's people go and warning of divine judgment upon him when he refuses (Exod 7:1-4, 16-18; 8:1-5).

After YHWH delivers his people from Egypt, Moses will stand between YHWH and Israel, mediating the covenant law of God to his people. He will ascend and descend the mountain of God, receiving his words and delivering them to the people until the glory of God tabernacles in the midst of Israel (Exod 19-40). Moreover, throughout the wilderness wanderings, Moses mediated the glorious presence of YHWH by meeting with him, receiving his words, and then speaking his words to the people (Exod 29:42; 33:7-11). The words of YHWH are so bound up with his presence that Moses' face glows with the glory of God (Exod 34:29-35).

The signs Moses performed signified that YHWH had appeared to him (Exod 4:1) and would accomplish the redemption of his people (Exod 6:6-8). By their nature as "signs," they pointed to the greater reality of YHWH's glory in saving Israel and judging Pharaoh and the false gods of Egypt (Exod 7:4-5, 16-18; 8:9-10; 9:13-16). Some variation of the phrase "you shall know" is used twelve times in Exodus 6-14. The phrase is always used to describe something about YHWH that will be revealed through the signs Moses performs. His glory is displayed through his mighty works which Moses was empowered to accomplish. It is by speaking God's words and doing God's works that Israel will believe that YHWH sent Moses and that God's salvation and judgment has come.

Exodus-like response. The wilderness generation's repeated response of unbelief prefigures Israel's refusal to hear and heed the Prophet like Moses (Duet 18:15b, 19). Initially, Israel heard and believed Moses and his message of salvation (Exod 4:29-31),

but soon doubt set in as YHWH's promise was tested by the Israelites' circumstances (5:19-21). The unbelief, grumbling, rejection, and malice that their doubt produced, continued to mark the people of Israel throughout their wilderness experience. At Marah, the people encountered bitter water and could not drink, so they grumbled against Moses (Exod 15:22-25). The whole congregation grumbled against Moses and YHWH when they hungered for meat and bread (Exod 16:1-12). As they made camp at Rephidim, Israel quarreled and grumbled against Moses because there was no water to drink (Exod 17:1-7). In Exodus 17:7 the author explains that they doubted God was present with them to provide for their needs. In this passage the Israelites put YHWH on trial, calling his faithfulness and goodness into question. T. Desmond Alexander writes, "Implicit in the use of the verb *rib* is the idea that one party has been wronged by another: *rib* has 'quasi-judicial overtones,' being a stronger term than 'grumbled.'"³⁴ Mercifully, through all this YHWH provided abundant water and bread for his people. He made bitter water sweet (Exod 15:25), caused bread to fall from heaven for forty years (Exod 16:14-15, 35), and brought water forth from the stricken rock (Exod 17:6). These miraculous signs should have instilled faith in God's people, yet their unbelief continued and climaxed in attempts to execute Moses and return to Egypt (Exod 17:4; Num 14:4, 10).

Similarly, the people and the religious leaders of Israel refused to believe the words of Jesus (5:38, 47; 6:36, 64). Jesus turned water to wine (2:9-11), caused a dying boy to live (4:50-53), and restored a crippled man to health (5:8-9), yet the Jews refuse to believe him (5:38); and their unbelief in "the one whom [the Father] has sent" is a result of their refusal to believe Moses (5:44-47). Like the Exodus generation, Jesus' audience grumbles in the context of bread and water, hunger and thirst. In chapter 6, Jesus provides bread for thousands (6:1-14), traverses the seas to save his people (6:16-21), and is himself the bread from heaven (6:33-35). However, like their fathers in the wilderness,

³⁴ T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 334.

the Jews persist in grumbling against Jesus (6:41, 43, 48-49, 52, 61). Since the healing sign in 5:8-9, the Jews desired to kill him (5:16-18). Their animosity grew each time Jesus spoke the words of his Father (7:16). Finally, the religious leaders issued an arrest warrant with intent to kill him (7:1, 30, 44). Jesus' teaching divided the people. As he claims that his flesh is the God-provided, life-giving meat to be eaten and his blood the drink to be drunk (6:53-58), the Jews disputed and his disciples grumbled and forsook him (6:52, 60-66). The apostle said that this wilderness-like result is rooted in unbelief (6:64).

The Messiah Superior to Moses

As demonstrated in this chapter, there is significant continuity between Moses and Jesus, but there is also striking discontinuity, a sharp contrast which the FG has made clear since 1:1-18. God gave his covenant law to Israel through Moses (Exod 19–20), but he has given grace and truth through Jesus Christ (1:17). Moses sees YHWH's back and cannot see his face (Exod 33:18-23), but Jesus Christ is face-to-face with the Father (1:18).³⁵ Moses lifted up the serpent so that snake-bitten people might live, but the Son of Man was lifted up to give eternal life to the perishing (3:14-15). Not surprisingly, then, the reader finds significant contrasts in chapters 5–7 where the Exodus motif is so prominent. In what follows I will argue that John presents Jesus as superior to Moses and entirely unique by virtue of the Son's divine identity and salvific commission; Jesus is the Holy One of God.

The Prophet-Messiah's Divine Identity

Utterly unlike Moses, the Son of Man was understood to be making himself equal with God (5:18). In the FG, and certainly in Jesus' self-understanding, the Son is not another god alongside God who is equal in power and glory, nor is he another god of equal standing who rivals God in authority and majesty.³⁶ Jesus is not "making himself" a divine

³⁵ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 59.

³⁶ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 250.

rival or ally, as the Jews may suppose; rather, the Evangelist makes clear that “the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1), that Jesus is one with the Father (10:30), and to see Jesus is to see the Father (14:9). Jesus goes on to make the case in chapter 5 that the Son of God and the Father share as one in divine love, honor, life, and judgment (5:19-31). Far from presenting himself as another god of equal perfections, the Son of God works in dependent unison, mutual love, and shared divine knowledge and glory with the Father (5:19-23).

In John 5–7, Jesus is not merely another Moses, like John is another Elijah (Matt 17:12). Instead, the incarnate Son shares as one in the divine nature with the Father. Chapter 5 manifests the Son’s equality and unity with the Father by their shared work in the Sabbath restoration of sinners (5:1-18). The Son grounds his refusal to do anything apart from his Father in the Father’s unique love for the Son (5:19-20). Moreover, the Son raises the dead and gives life (5:21, 24-25), exorcises divine judgment (5:22, 28-29), receives honor reserved for God alone (5:22-23), and has life in himself (5:26). These essential qualities and mighty works belong only to God and not to any other being. The Son speaks and acts as God, in essential unity with the Father. As Jesus says in 14:9, “Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”

Chapter 6 likens Jesus to Moses while demonstrating that the Son of God is not like Moses in significant ways. Jesus not only provides bread for thousands, thus sustaining Israel and doing what YHWH did in Exodus 16, but he claims to be the bread of God by which man lives everlastingly (6:22-59; cf. Deut 8:3). In this discourse, Jesus uses the provision of bread to point to himself as heaven’s provision of eternal life (6:35-40, 51). John has separated Jesus’ bread sign in verses 1-15 from his “I Am” saying in verses 22-59 by Jesus’ pronouncement of the divine name in reference to himself (vv. 16-21; cf. 8:59). As Jesus traverses the raging seas, he calms the fears of the disciples by assuring them that ἐγὼ εἶμι is present with them; they need not fear. As if nothing has transpired,

the boat arrives safely to the other side (6:16-21). It is the twelve, representing the new Israel of God, who find Jesus to have the “words of eternal life” (6:68).

The central feature in chapter 7 is Jesus’ call to come to him and drink (7:37-39). Moses struck the wilderness rock at the command of YHWH (Exod 17:1-7), while Jesus claims to be the source—the rock—of living waters, the giver of the life-giving Spirit whom he would pour out when glorified (7:37-39). The Exodus narratives repeatedly reveal Moses’ inability to provide water for Israel (Exod 15:24-25a; 17:4; Num 20:6). The Exodus writings make it unambiguous, YHWH provided water and not Moses (Exod 15:25-27; 17:5-6; Num 20:8; 21:16). Thus, Jesus identifies himself with YHWH who is the source of living water, not Moses who cannot provide water. While each of these salvific Exodus events will be examined more closely in the next chapter of this thesis, Jesus’ association with them reveals that he is the divine savior, not merely a prophetic mediator like Moses.

The Prophet-Messiah’s Salvific Commission

YHWH descended to deliver Israel from Egypt, bringing them out of “that land to a good and broad land” (Exod 3:8). He saw his people’s affliction and knew their sufferings (Exod 2:25; 3:7); their “cry for rescue” came up (Exod 2:23) and YHWH “[came] down” in covenant mercy and remembrance to set his enslaved people free (Exod 3:8). The Exodus was a “salvation” or “deliverance” (Exod 3:3) event which rescued, constituted, and shaped a people for God, situating them in the land of promise. By coming down and bringing them out, by being personally present (Exod 3:3) and powerfully active (Exod 3:19-22; 7:3-5), YHWH demonstrated that he himself would “deliver” the children of Israel. Moreover, YHWH worked this great salvation through Moses, who spoke and worked on God’s behalf (Exod 3:10). Moses will bring the people out of Egypt (Exod 3:12) as he speaks YHWH’s words (Exod 3:14-18; 4:14-16, 28a) and performs YHWH’s sign-works (Exod 4:8-9, 17, 28b). Yet, from the beginning and throughout the wilderness

writings it is YHWH who delivers his people (Exod 6:6-7; 14:30), gets glory over Pharaoh (Exod 14:4, 17-18), and leads his people by word, cloud, and fire, bringing them into the land long promised (Exod 13:21-22; 23:20-31).

Several aspects of the Exodus salvation become clear by the light of these verses. First, it is YHWH who will come down to save his people. He will deliver them by his words and sign-works. He will lead them out and establish them in the land. Second, YHWH commissions Moses as his agent of salvation. This Exodus is a salvation from bondage in Egypt, with all its hardships, sufferings, and misery. It is a salvation from YHWH's wrath through the Passover lamb. It is also a salvation to YHWH, to feast with him and sacrifice to him in the wilderness as his chosen covenant people (Exod 5:1, 3; 6:6-8; 18:12).

By recounting the salvific events of the Exodus in chapters 5–7, the FG teaches that Jesus is calling “the children of God,” or the New Covenant people of God, out of the world (cf. 10:1-18; 11:51-52). The Son's commission is salvific in the most significant of senses: he will give eternal life and raise the dead (5:21, 24-25). YHWH sent Moses to deliver the children of Israel from slavery to Pharaoh, but the Father set his seal on his one and only Son (5:27), consecrated him (10:36), and sent him into the world to give life to the dead, thus saving slaves of sin (5:24; cf. 8:31-34). Jesus provides bread for the thousands “following him” as he “went away” from the Jerusalem temple (6:1-14; cf. 5:2, 14). Pronouncing the divine name, the Son of God saves the twelve through the sea (5:16-21; Ps 77:19-20) and chose them to be the foundation of God's new people (6:69-71). The “twelve” have been drawn to the Son (6:44) and therefore come to the “Lord” who has the “words of eternal life” (6:68); and as the new Israel, they confess him to be “the Holy One of God” (6:69). Ridderbos refers to Jesus' choosing of the twelve in 6:70 as a “salvific election . . . to follow him as the numerically complete representation of Israel.”³⁷

³⁷ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 250.

Just as YHWH came down to deliver Israel (Exod 3:8), so too the Son of Man is he who “comes down” from heaven to give life to the world, both Jews and Gentiles (5:33). The coming down of the Son is an important theme in John’s Gospel.³⁸ Aside from the inferences of coming down in 1:1-18, the FG teaches that the Son of Man “descended from heaven” (3:13), he is “from God” and “came down from heaven” to do his Father’s will (6:46, 38), and he is “the bread that comes down from heaven” (6:50; cf. 6:51, 58). John presents Jesus as no less than the divine Son who has come down to do God’s works of raising the dead and giving life (5:21, 25), and judging all men (5:22, 27). The Son has life in himself (5:26) and he shares in divine love (5:20) and divine honor (5:23). The coming down of the Son is the covenant God’s intervention to save his people. As Andreas Köstenberger notes, “coming and going terminology appears to emphasize Jesus’ divine provenance and destination.”³⁹

The Son’s salvific commission will not fail. In contrast to Moses’ failure to trust and sanctify YHWH in the sight of the people at Meribah-kadesh, and thus was prohibited from entering the land and leading all Israel out of the wilderness (Num 20:12-13; Deut 32:50-52), the Son of Man will faithfully do “the will of him who sent [him]” (6:38). Whereas Moses was unable to bring the millions who saw YHWH’s glory and power into Canaan (Num 14:21-23), all that the Father gives to the Son will come to him; they will never be cast out but will have eternal life and be raised up on the last day (6:37-40). While Israel repeatedly refused to hear, believe, and obey YHWH’s sign-authenticated word (Num 14:11), the Father will effectively teach and irresistibly draw all whom he will give to the Son (6:44-45, 64-65; cf. 17:1-9).

³⁸ Cf. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, 526-28, for the decent-ascent theme.

³⁹ Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, 526. So also D. Moody Smith, who references not only John 1:1 but Col 1:15-20 and Heb 1:1-3, notes that “descending” is related to the Son’s logical and chronological preexistence. D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 100.

Conclusion

John presents Jesus as the Prophet-Messiah of whom Moses wrote, while asserting the utter uniqueness of the Holy One of God. This chapter demonstrated that Moses wrote of the Messiah—the Messiah who is greater than Moses. The Evangelist understands Moses to have written of the Messiah, who is Jesus, the Son of God (20:31), typologically and prophetically. Typologically, the Jewish feasts, the Exodus-like signs, and the pattern of Exodus events in John 5–7 reveal that the Prophet like Moses is the Messiah to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. The FG identifies Jesus as “the Prophet,” the one to come of whom Moses specifically wrote in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Yet, the Gospel’s account of Jesus is that Moses’ Messiah is greater than the Exodus prophet. Moses’ Prophet-Messiah shares in the divine nature, prerogatives, and honor, and is himself the savior on the sea who came down from heaven to deliver, raise up, and keep all whom the Father gave him. Thus, his holiness is seen in that he is the one sent by God and the one who is God.

CHAPTER 3

PROVIDER, SAVIOR, AND PASSOVER LAMB

Chapter 2 established that, according to John, Moses wrote prophetically and typologically of the Messiah. Jesus himself stated this to the Jews in 5:39-47. In 6:1–7:52, the FG calls upon the writings of Moses to bear witness to Jesus as the Messiah. Yet, the Exodus writings reveal a very different Messiah than many in first century Palestine expected. The Messiah would be none other than YHWH, the Savior, Judge, and Provider of the Exodus (cf. Ezek 34:11-16), a view commonly held by the early church: “Now I want to remind you, although you once fully knew it, that Jesus, who saved a people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe” (Jude 5; cf. 1 Cor 10:4, 9). Moreover, according to the FG, the Messiah is also the Passover Lamb (1:29, 36). In this chapter I argue that John identifies Jesus as YHWH of the Exodus writings, and the One consecrated by the Father to provide his flesh and blood for the life of the world. As the heavenly Provider and Savior, Jesus is the Bread of Life who gives eternal life through his wrath-absorbing, sin-atoning death. Therefore, his life-giving words garnish the profession in 6:69: “You are the Holy One of God.”

Peter’s confession in 6:69 is set in the atmosphere of the Jewish feasts prescribed by Moses in the Law (5:1, 9-10; 6:4; 7:2, 8-11, 14, 37; cf. Lev 23:1-44). In John 5, those who have set their hope on Moses persecuted and sought to kill Jesus for his Sabbath healing and his claim to share in his Father’s deity (5:16, 18, 45). In response to their attacks, which the Jews justified by the Mosaic Law, Jesus boldly declared, “Moses . . . wrote of me” (5:46). By this assertion, John endeavors to show his audience how and in what ways Moses wrote of the Messiah. Richard Hays draws the same conclusion of 1:45-46 when he writes, “That summons, ‘Come and see,’ functions also as an invitation

to the reader of the Fourth Gospel, an invitation to discern, among other things, whether the Jesus they will meet in this story is in fact prefigured by Moses and the prophets.”¹ If John primarily wrote to evangelize Jews and God-fearing Gentiles, as D. A. Carson and others suggest, then demonstrating that Jesus is the Messiah by the writings of Moses is a theologically and culturally calculated way to evangelize them.²

The events of chapter 6 are framed by Jesus’ movement away (*ἀπῆλθεν*) from the unbelieving Jews at the Jerusalem temple (5:14; 6:1) and the disciples’ movement away (*ἀπῆλθον*) from Jesus in unbelief (6:66; cf. 6:68). Between these departures, the account confirms John’s strategy of Mosaic evangelism by presenting Jesus in Exodus-like events and encounters. The Bread of Life discourse in verses 22-71 provides an explanation of the Passover sign and sea crossing in verses 1-21. Jesus is the provider of an abundant and better bread from heaven, and he is the One greater than Moses because he everlastingly feeds his people (6:1-15, 22-50, 58; cf. Exod 16:1-36). Jesus is the “I Am” who pronounces His divine name as he saves his people on the sea (6:16-21; cf. Exod 14-15); and he is the Passover Lamb from heaven who gives his own flesh and blood “for the life of the world” (6:51-59; cf. Exod 12:1–13:16). This Exodus-laden mini-series crescendos in Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Holy One of God in 6:69. Peter’s confession, and the twelve’s resolve to stay with Jesus, stand in contrast to the mass exodus away from Moses’ Messiah: “After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him” (6:66). This defection from the Holy One of God will eventually include one of the twelve (6:70-71). Chapter 7 will bolster Peter’s confession despite this desertion, as Jesus claims

¹ Richard B. Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), 75.

² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 91. Cf. Andreas Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 70. Yet this Gospel’s evangelistic thrust should not be affirmed in isolation of local churches in Asia Minor. It seems best to understand John’s original audience as a church or churches who may have required a cogent apologetic in their engagement with unbelieving Jews and proselytes to Judaism. By intended implication, the FG also functions as a means of discipleship for those already believing in Jesus Christ for eternal life (cf. John 13-17). Cf. William F. Cook, *John: Jesus Christ Is God* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 13.

to be superior to the water-giving rock of the wilderness wonderings. The Holy One of God will provide the life-giving water of the Spirit from the stricken rock (7:2, 37-39; Exod 17:1-7).

John 6:1-15: The Passover Feast Sign

The Passover sign signifies that Jesus is to be identified with YHWH of Exodus 12–16, and the Mosaic Prophet who is to come into the world (Deut 18:15-19). The “Passover, the feast of the Jews” (v. 4), is the historical context for 6:1-71 and sets the stage for all that transpires in chapter 6. Yet, this is more than a historical marker; the Passover feast serves as a theological reference to the saving acts of YHWH in the Exodus event. It enables the reader to understand Jesus’ words and works in light of YHWH’s Exodus salvation. The feast of Passover memorialized YHWH’s strong-handed deliverance of Israel from Egypt, recalling his slaughter of all the firstborn of Egypt so that he might redeem his firstborn son (Exod 13:3-16; 4:23). By instituting this feast, YHWH gave the children of Israel an annual opportunity to remember and declare his salvation (Exod 13:3, 8-10).

On the Passover evening Israel was to eat all “the flesh” and “let none of it remain until the morning” (Exod 12:8, 10). Every household was to take a lamb, and at twilight, on the fourteenth day of the first month “the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel” was to slaughter or “kill” (σφάζουσιν) their lambs, then smear the lamb’s blood on the door posts and lintel of the house where the Passover was eaten (Exod 12:6-7). YHWH promised to pass over the Israelites who sheltered under the lamb’s blood while he passed through the land of Egypt to strike dead all the firstborn and execute judgment on Egypt’s gods (Exod 12:12-13, 22-23). The “sacrifice” of the Passover lamb, as well as the sacrificial meal that followed, memorialized YHWH’s salvation and judgment for the succeeding generations as they annually served and worshiped the Lord by this feast (Exod 12:24-27). The FG uses the paramount Exodus sign and its commemorating meal to present Jesus as Provider, Savior, and Passover Meal. In 6:1-59, Moses’ Messiah is the Provider

of abundant life-giving bread (vv. 1-15), the “I Am” who saves his people on the sea (vv. 16-21), and the Bread of Life and Passover Lamb who gives his flesh and blood through death for the life of the world (vv. 22-59).

The Setting and the Sign

The narrative is framed by Jesus’ movement “away” (ἀπῆλθεν) from the Jerusalem temple (5:14; 6:1) and the disciples’ movement “away” (ἀπῆλθον) from Jesus—the true temple and sacrificial offering—in disgust (6:66; cf. 6:68), arguing for Passover imagery throughout and the unity of the of the chap. Verses 1-4 situate Jesus’ fourth sign on the mountain side (v. 3) near the Sea of Galilee (v. 1) during “the Passover feast of the Jews” (v. 4). It appears that Jesus intended to be alone with his disciples, but that was short lived. In the prior episode, Jesus declared that Moses wrote of him, the Messiah (5:46), and now the Evangelist begins to show the paradigmatic ways in which Moses wrote of the Messiah. For the immediate pericope, the Passover Feast serves to enable the reader to understand the Messiah in view of YHWH’s salvation of Israel in the Exodus. John advances that this annual Exodus commemoration is being fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah, and that his readers should understand Moses to have written of the Messiah typologically as he wrote of the Passover and Exodus.

Verses 5-9 comprise Jesus’ testing of Philip and the twelve. Upon seeing the large crowd coming toward him, Jesus asks Philip about the source of bread for such a large crowd: “Where are we to buy bread, so that these people may eat?” (v. 5). Jesus said this “to test him, for he knew what he would do.” The source of bread is Jesus’ concern when he poses the question, and that he alone provides such bread will be his point. Noting this helps the reader and the twelve understand the significance of the sign that follows: just as YHWH gave bread from heaven to the children of Israel in the wilderness, so too Jesus abundantly provides for the crowd. Philip’s response in verse 7 asserts that two hundred denarii are insufficient to purchase enough bread for the five thousand people. Andrew’s comments in verse 9 demonstrate the great disparity between

what the twelve had by way of a boy's five loaves and two fish, and what the actual need was by way of the five thousand men (v. 10). They do not have the means or ability to provide food, even if they could get to the source. The disparity also reveals the magnitude of Jesus' sign.

Verses 10-13 set forth the sign, but it is a sign unadorned by phenomenal language. The emphasis of the text is on Jesus and what he does. He tells the disciples to seat the people; he then takes the loaves and gives thanks and distributes the loaves and fish to those seated, as much as the masses desired (cf. Exod 16:16, 18). He then tells the disciples to gather what is left into baskets that nothing may be lost. Whereas the synoptics record Jesus distributing the bread and fish to the disciples and the disciples to the crowds, Jesus personally provides for the multitude in the FG (cf. Matt 14:19; Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16). In John, the disciples are those who gather the abundance of leftovers in twelve baskets (vv. 12-13), not those who provide for the people. Jesus is the provider, the five thousand and the twelve are the well satisfied recipients. At this point in the chapter, the sign signifies that Jesus is the provider of an abundant life-giving meal, just as YHWH (not Moses) provided bread for Israel in the wilderness (v. 32; Exod 16:1-36). Furthermore, like YHWH, Jesus "gives . . . meat to eat and . . . bread to the full" (Exod 16:8). Jesus, as the bread from heaven, will be the point of the sign in the discourse of verses 22-51.

The response of the people follows in verses 14-15. When they "saw the sign that he had done," they confidently declare in verse 14, "this is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world!" Once again, the emphasis is on what Jesus has done in providing abundantly for Israel and the disciples. John does not describe how the miracle occurs, but that Jesus did this obvious sign (ὁ ἐποίησεν σημεῖον). The sign signals to the satisfied crowd that Jesus is "the Prophet," the one expected "to come into the world." His provision of bread and fish legitimized his role as the one who is to come, but not just to provide a meal. In the crowd's eyes, the coming prophet is also the anointed king who will restore the kingdom to Israel (v. 15).

“The Prophet” is mentioned a total of four times in the FG, twice in chapter 1 by the priests and Levites as they questioned John the Baptist about his identity (1:21, 25), once by the people in 6:14, and once by some of the crowd in 7:40. The response in 7:40 is to the words of Jesus, while the response in 6:14 is to the sign. From these usages it is clear that the Jewish people as a whole expected God to send “the Prophet.” In 1:21, 1:25, and 7:40, “the Prophet” is distinguished from, but related to “the Christ,” while in 6:14-15 the people connect “the Prophet” who is to come with the idea of kingship, which is messianic: “This is indeed the Prophet who is to come into the world . . . they were about to come and take him by force to make him king.” According to Richard Bauckham, for Jesus’ contemporaries, the evidence suggests that the relationship between the Messiah and the Prophet was one of eschatology and not identity. Elijah, the Messiah, and the Prophet were not the same person, but three eschatological figures expected in the last days.³

There is a strong consensus among scholars that the references in John to “the Prophet” refer to the prophet like Moses from Deuteronomy 18:15-19, which was interpreted by some of Jesus’ contemporaries as Messianic.⁴ In this passage, the crowd declares that Jesus is the promised Prophet like Moses; he not only performs miraculous signs, but he performs an Exodus feeding miracle (6:2, 14; cf. Exod 16:1-30). Understandably then, the crowd will endeavor to force the Prophet to be their king. It is ironic though that the crowd seizes on the sign of the Prophet rather than on his prophetic teaching. This too coheres with the Exodus motif (Exod 16:4, 20; 24:7; 32:8). The function of a prophet is revelatory; prophets speak God’s words, revealing God’s will which is to be obeyed. Signs authenticate the prophet’s divine authority and the reliability

³ Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 208; Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, 325.

⁴ Cf. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 271; George Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 88.

of his message of salvation and judgment (Exod 4:1-9).⁵ Yet, as it plays out in the narrative, the people will have nothing to do with the Prophet's "teaching" or his "words of eternal life" (vv. 59-60, 63; cf. v.68).

Bauckham maintains that while the crowd forcefully desired Jesus to be their Moses-like deliverer, the Evangelist himself uses "king" (βασιλέα) to signal Jesus' Messianic identity.⁶ According to John's report of Jesus' response in verse 15, the people misunderstand the nature and role of the Prophet like Moses, along with the kind of king he is. Yet the Evangelist affirms their profession by his Exodus ques in the narrative: the Passover Feast was near (v. 4), Jesus is recognized as the Prophet (Deut 18:15), he pronounces the divine name in reference to himself when he saves the disciples on the sea (vv. 16-21), and he directly speaks of the wilderness feeding in relationship to himself in verses 31-33—the people grumble against him and refuse to follow him into life (vv. 41-51, 60-66).⁷

The Sign's Significance

George Beasley-Murray argues correctly that Jesus' feeding miracle repeats the wilderness feeding and goes on to signify "the fulfillment of hope of the new Exodus brought about by Jesus."⁸ The Passover in verse 4, the sacrificial death of God's Lamb in verses 51-58, the connection of Moses to Jesus in verses 32-35, and especially the "movement" of bread to flesh supports this thesis.⁹ While it is clear that verses 1-15 must be seen in relationship to verses 22-59, in themselves verses 1-15 bear out a significance of Jesus' feeding sign. With the backdrop of the Passover Feast in verse 4, the divine Son

⁵ Cf. Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 218.

⁶ Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciples*, 223.

⁷ Cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 88.

⁸ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 87.

⁹ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 87.

(5:19-47) is identified in 6:1-15 with YHWH; he is the provider of an abundant feast for Israel. The Prophet like Moses is far greater than Moses. It was YHWH, not Moses, who gave Israel bread from heaven (v. 32). Thus, John redefines the people's eschatological expectations of the Prophet who is also the coming king, and he identifies Jesus with YHWH of the wilderness writings.

The wilderness feeding of Exodus 16 clearly sets forth YHWH, not Moses, as the provider. YHWH says he will "rain bread from heaven" on the people (Exod 16:4). Moses tells the host of grumblers that YHWH will give them "meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full" (v. 8). By his overflowing provision, the people will "know that I am the LORD your God" (v. 12). It is with this wilderness feeding in the background that John, though not the crowd or the disciples at that point, identifies Jesus with YHWH, revealing him to be the provider of abundant bread. YHWH, "my Father," gave Israel bread in the wilderness, not Moses (6:32). For John, he will not record the disciples' involvement in the distribution of the food, an act that each of the synoptics recount¹⁰; it is Jesus alone who is the provider of heaven's bread and "the supplier of man's need" of eternal life (6:11).¹¹

John 6:16-21: The Savior on the Sea

On the heels of the Passover feeding sign, John describes Jesus as the Exodus-like savior of the sea crossing. Jesus is identified with YHWH in this episode by his words and actions. Jesus refers to himself as "I am" (cf. Exod 3:14), walks upon the sea (cf. Job 9:8; Ps 77:19-20), and calms the fears of his people by his saving presence. Thus, he brings the disciples safely to land, their desired destination (cf. Exod 14:10, 13, 31; Ps 107:29-30). Though short in length, John has filled this concise episode with a large amount of theological content.

¹⁰ Leon Morris, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), 344-45; Matt 14:19; Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16.

¹¹ Morris, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 340.

The scene in 6:16-21 begins to unfold as the disciples set out at night to cross the sea for Capernaum. The sea became rough because of a strong wind. In the midst of the storm, they saw Jesus walking upon the sea (περιπατοῦντα ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάσσης). The disciples were overcome with fear as he came near the boat. In response to their fear, Jesus declares himself to be “I am” and commands them not to be afraid: “It is I [ἐγώ εἰμι]; do not be afraid” (v. 20). After assuring the disciples that he himself was present with them, they gladly took Jesus into the boat, which “immediately . . . was at the land to which they were going” (v. 21).

This brief account moves the narrative along geographically and theologically.¹² Geographically, Jesus and the disciples come to Capernaum, on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Theologically, the sea crossing links the Passover feeding sign with the Bread of Life discourse. The Prophet like Moses who provided abundant bread and meat (vv. 11-16), and the one who declares, “I am the bread of life” (6:35), is the “I Am” of the sea crossing. He is the one who comes to the rescue of his people, trampling the waves underfoot and calming their fears.

Walking on the Sea

Regardless if one takes the walking on the sea as one of John’s signs or not, it is miraculous.¹³ There is a strong consensus among scholars that the sea crossing is a miracle,¹⁴ though there is disagreement on whether it is one of John’s signs. The reader is to understand from this event that John identifies Jesus with YHWH by his “I Am” pronouncement and sea crossing. Moreover, John also recognizes Jesus to be the Prophet

¹² See Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 273, who lists four reasons for this passage: (1) it is linked with the feeding in the synoptics, (2) it explains the return to Capernaum, and (3) it is connected to the exodus theme and (4) the structural relationship to the rest of the chapter.

¹³ Contra J. H. Bernard and W. Barclay, who understand Jesus to walk *by* the sea rather than *on* the sea. Cited by Carson in *The Gospel According to John*, 275.

¹⁴ See Beasley-Murray, *John*, 89-90; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 275; Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 216.

like Moses who conducts the safe passage of his disciples through the sea. Thus, Jesus is the One consecrated by YHWH to save his people. Yet, the FG is correcting the crowd's misunderstanding of Jesus as demonstrated by their right profession and wrong action in verses 14-15. Jesus is more than a prophet, and much more than a revolutionary ruler in need of the crowd's political support. He is the "I Am" savior of the Red Sea crossing.

There are at least three allusions to the OT in this episode. The evening turned to darkness and Jesus had not yet come to the disciples. The winds are strong, and the waves are high, but he was not with them. After rowing about twenty or thirty stadia, some three or four miles into the middle of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus appears walking upon the sea. It is likely that John is alluding to several OT texts in verse 19.¹⁵ The first, Job 9:8, states that God alone "stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea." Thus, Jesus is identified with the creator God, the one who made the heavens and exorcises his sovereign but mysterious power over the sea (cf. Job 9:5, 10-11). In verse 11, Job says that God "passes by me, and I see him not; he moves on, but I do not perceive him." In John's account, the disciples do not know who is walking on the sea, but they are terrified that he is there.¹⁶

The second allusion is to Psalm 77:19: "Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen." In Psalm 77, the psalmist is crying out to God for help in times of trouble (vv. 1-3). At night, when questions arise as to God's faithfulness, favor, covenant love, promises, grace, and compassion (vv. 4-9), the psalmist remembers the mighty works and wonders of the "Most High" (vv. 10-14). With his mighty arm the Lord "redeemed . . . the children of Jacob and Joseph" (v. 15). The specific historical account is that of the Exodus, thus the third allusion. God's redemption

¹⁵ For these allusions, see G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 444.

¹⁶ Mark 6:48 further confirms the allusion to Job 9:8 in light of Job 9:11 by Jesus' intent "to pass by them." Job 9:11 reads, "Behold, he passes by me, and I see him not; he moves on, but I do not perceive him." Yet in John, the Word reveals the glory of the invisible God (1:18), so Jesus to the disciples.

was seen when his “way was through the sea, [his] path through the great waters; yet [his] footprints were unseen,” as he “led [his] people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” (vv. 19-20).

Psalm 77:19-20 harkens back to Exodus 14:1-31, when YHWH drove the sea back at night, brought Israel through the sea on dry ground, destroyed the panicked and terrified Egyptians, and delivered his people by his great power (vv. 21-31a). As a result of seeing YHWH’s powerful deliverance through the sea, “the people feared the LORD, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses” (v. 31b). By way of the Psalms, the FG connects its readers once again to the Exodus. Beasley-Murray writes, “The Evangelist was describing an event in which he saw Jesus as the revelation of God coming to his disciples in distress—in the *second Exodus!*”¹⁷

John describes the fright of the disciples as fear not due to the storm, but because they “saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat” (v. 19). In the OT, fear often characterized the recipients of God’s theophanic, self-revelation. This is true especially in the Pentateuch. Adam and Eve were “afraid” when the LORD God approached in the garden (Gen 3:10). Jacob “was afraid” when he realized that YHWH, the God of his fathers, Abraham and Isaac, revealed himself to Jacob at Bethel (Gen 28:12-19). In Genesis 31:42 and 53, Jacob even refers to God as the “fear of Isaac.” When YHWH revealed himself to Moses in the burning bush and declared that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, “Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God” (Exod 3:6). Moreover, Israel “feared the LORD” when they saw his majestic power in the Red Sea salvation (Exod 14:31). The angel of God in the pillar of blazing cloud was manifested to Israel when YHWH led his people safely through the waters to the shore; and there he shook the Egyptians off into the sea (Exod 14:19-20, 30). With this background, it seems best to understand the response of the disciples to be in line with those who have encountered the majestic revelation of God (cf. Matt 14:33).

¹⁷ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 89, emphasis original.

I Am

After seeing this unknown but sovereign one walking on the sea, the disciples were terrified (v. 19). Jesus responds with words of identification and assurance in verse 20: “It is I; do not be afraid.” The Greek text reads ἐγώ εἰμι· μὴ φοβεῖσθε. There is debate about Jesus’ words, ἐγώ εἰμι. Is he simply identifying himself as Jesus to the disciples so that they know he is not a ghost (cf. Mark 6:49)? Or is the FG identifying Jesus with the “I Am” of Exodus 3:14? It seems that both are true. Jesus is assuring the disciples that it is he whom they are seeing on the sea, and therefore he has come to rescue them. Yet, for John’s audience, ἐγώ εἰμι takes on the theological weight of Exodus 3:14, especially given the high Christology of the FG and the echoes of the Exodus events in chapters 5–7.

Carson shows that ἐγώ εἰμι is “the perfectly normal way to say ‘It is I’—a point made clear when it appears on the lips of the man born blind, after he is healed.”¹⁸ He goes on to point out that “the thoughtful reader who has read through this Gospel two or three times ought to observe the number and varied forms of ‘I am’ sayings . . . and wonder if this occurrence in v. 20 may not be an anticipation of a clearer self-disclosure by Jesus.”¹⁹ Moreover, when similar self-identifications are considered, those where Jesus’ identity is in question and his declaration coincides with a significant response from others, it seems clear that he is identifying himself as more than a mere man from Nazareth; he shares in the eternal, self-existent nature of God (cf. 8:58-59; 18:6).

In the Septuagint (LXX), Exodus 3:14 reads, Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὄν. Duane Garrett translates the Hebrew phrase as, “This is who I am: I AM.”²⁰ When God responds to Moses’ request for the name of the one who would send Moses and deliver Israel, he declares himself to be “I Am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) and sets himself apart from the gods of Egypt. His being is not contingent, his power is not limited; by his nature he is essentially existent,

¹⁸ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 275.

¹⁹ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 276.

²⁰ Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 193.

whereas all other things are by their nature dependent upon him, the one who is. Garrett argues that to ask for God's name "is to miss the point completely, because he is not one of the gods at all."²¹ He is the self-existent, almighty creator, and the one who has come near to Israel in covenant salvation. Thus his "name forever" (ESV) or "abiding identity"²² is "the LORD, the God of your fathers" (v. 15). Garrett comments on verse 15 that "the 'name' here is not just YHWH; it is 'YHWH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' In short, he forever identifies himself with the covenant, with the patriarchs, and with Israel."²³

The use of ἐγώ εἰμι within the context of the Exodus-like events indicates "a solidarity or union with [God]" that Jesus uniquely possesses as the One in whom God utters himself fully and finally.²⁴ To see Jesus walking on the sea is to see the Father (John 14:7, 9). What is just as startling about this scene is that the one who treaded upon the waves, the one who caused the disciples to fear, and the one who identifies himself as the "I Am" and revealed himself to Moses and Israel, is the one who commands his followers not to fear, for he is with them; he brings them safely "to the land to which they were going" (John 6:20-21).

John 6:22-59: Jesus Is the Sacrificial Passover Meal

John has shown Jesus to be the provider of the Passover feast, the one who abundantly satisfies (vv. 1-15), and the "I Am" savior who treads upon the sea and delivers his people (vv. 16-21). Moreover, Jesus is the anticipated Mosaic Prophet and Messianic king, the one consecrated by YHWH to conduct the safe passage of his people through the sea (vv. 14-15, 16-21). Now in 6:22-59, John identifies Jesus with the manna of the

²¹ Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, 207.

²² Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, 208.

²³ Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, 208.

²⁴ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 90.

wilderness miracle and as the sacrificial Passover meal, the one whose flesh is true food and whose blood is true and life-giving drink (v. 55). The Bread of Life discourse focuses on Jesus' mission; he has "come down from heaven" to do "the will of him who sent" him (v. 37). The discourse also clearly articulates his identity: he emphatically is the bread of life who has seen the Father and comes down from heaven (vv. 35, 46, 48, 51). Just as YHWH during the Exodus (and then Jesus on the mountain side) fed and filled the people with bread and meat, so Jesus is the bread from heaven who gives his flesh as food so that the world might live (vv. 51-53; Exod 16:12).

The day after the feeding and sea crossing, the crowd, composed of those who saw the sign and those who arrived after the sign, pursued Jesus for more bread, and eventually demanded a sign to authenticate his claim to be sent from God (vv. 22-31). Jesus responds to their demand for a sign by claiming to be the bread from heaven who gives eternal life (vv. 32-40). Rather than coming to Jesus by faith, and like the wilderness generation before them, the Jews grumble about him and his claim to come from heaven. After all, for these Galileans Jesus is the son of Joseph and is therefore a mere man (vv. 41-42). Jesus answers their protest of unbelief by asserting the necessity of the sovereign work of his Father—only the Father's drawing and teaching will enable them to come to the Son in faith. This divine instruction, which results in hearing and learning from the Father, saving faith in the Messiah, and resurrection life, was described in the Prophets and is declared by the Son (vv. 43-46). Solemnly, the Son, who has seen the invisible God, calls upon Israel to feast upon him by faith. Unlike the manna in the wilderness that did not prevent that generation from death, Jesus offers living bread that comes down from heaven so "that one may eat of it and not die" (v. 50). In verse 51, Jesus combines the manna analogy with Passover meal imagery and declares, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

At this point, the Jews begin to fight amongst themselves about Jesus' words; once again his words create division.²⁵ However, Jesus does not retreat or qualify his terms—he codifies the division by necessitating that they eat his flesh and drink his blood if they want to live forever and not die (v. 53). This manna-Passover analogy compares and contrasts YHWH's Passover lamb deliverance and his wilderness provision with the Son of Man who is the true and better Passover lamb, the true and better bread from heaven (vv. 54-58). John notes that Jesus "said these things in the synagogue at Capernaum" where he was teaching (v. 59). As the following discourse shows, this event demarcates a turning point in the ministry of Jesus in that region, a clear break between he and would-be disciples.²⁶ Though the Cana Cycle did not produce such a negative response, the Festival Cycle reveals that Jesus divided those in the countryside just as he divided those in the city. "He was in the world . . . yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him" (1:10-11).

In verses 22-59, John identifies Jesus with YHWH and the one sent by YHWH by his Exodus assertions and wilderness allusions. "Exodus assertions" are the emphatic self-referential statements that identify Jesus with YHWH of the Exodus events, or the one sent by YHWH. "Wilderness allusions" are those words and phrases which call to the readers' mind the experience of Moses and Israel in the wilderness journey from Egypt to Canaan. By these features, John shows how the writings of Moses bear witness to Jesus the Messiah, and that the Jews of Jesus' day do not believe what Moses wrote about him (5:46). The references to wilderness manna (vv. 31, 49), the Nehemiah 9:15 quote (v. 31), and the "grumbling" of the Jews about Jesus (vv. 41, 43, 61), continue the Exodus motif of this chapter. Furthermore, the repetition of "bread" and Jesus' own references of "flesh," "blood," "bread," and "drink" call attention to the Passover meal and sacrificial lamb of

²⁵ Murray Harris, *John*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 141.

²⁶ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 244.

Moses' writings. It is against the revelatory and redemptive backdrop of the Exodus that Jesus claims to be both the divine provider and the essential means of eternal life.

The Provider of Heaven's Bread

After arriving on the other side of the sea, the crowd engages Jesus in verse 25, wanting to know when the teacher had arrived. As is characteristic of Jesus' interactions, he bypasses comments and questions to address matters of messianic identity, unbelief, and saving faith (cf. 1:45-51; 2:18-22; 3:1-15; 4:9ff). Jesus exposes the crowd's motivation: they are not seeking him because of the signs he has done but because they ate their fill of bread. Rather than seeing Jesus as the provider of eternal life through the sign(s), the crowd comes to him as a means to another meal. Therefore, the Son of Man calls them to "work" for the food that will not perish, contrasting what he gives with the manna that perished in the wilderness (Exod 16:20). He calls them to strive for the life he freely gives (v. 27).²⁷ Indeed, God the Father has set his seal on Jesus, consecrating him to provide this life-giving bread (10:36).²⁸

Jesus' signs manifest aspects of his glory as the Messiah, the Son of God, and revelation of the Father (2:11; cf. 1:14, 18). John records them so that his readers will believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and thereby have life in his name (21:30-31, cf. 2:11).²⁹ Many will see Jesus' signs and exercise "faith," but a kind of faith that does not receive eternal life (cf. 2:23-25). Yet, this "inadequate faith" is better than no faith.³⁰ In verse 26, Jesus exposes the crowd's carnal motives; they do not even possess "sign faith." However, while exposing their hearts, he calls them to believe in him. By this indictment and appeal, Jesus makes the connection between the "signs" and his identity

²⁷ Harris, *John*, 130.

²⁸ So Raymond Brown, *The Gospel According to John, I-XII*, Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 261-62.

²⁹ Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 327.

³⁰ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 183-84.

that the signs signify: he is the provider of abundant food that endures to eternal life (v. 27). To be sure, the “signs” in verse 26 include the healing of the lame man in 5:8-9 and the feeding of the five thousand, but the crowd has not risen above their craving for food to see this, a fatal craving shared with their wilderness fathers (vv. 31, 49, 58; Exod 16:3; Num 11:4).

The Passover feeding sign, which signaled that Jesus is the Exodus-like provider of eternal life, is reinforced in verse 27, as the FG associates Jesus with YHWH of the Exodus. In addition, Jesus clarifies for the bread-craving crowd that “it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven” (v. 32). As the hungry seekers look to Jesus for food, Jesus implores them to look to him for eternal life (v. 27): “Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you.” Jesus’ statement clearly infers that, as the Son of Man, he is the source of the life of God. The Son, like the Father, has “life in himself” and can therefore give “life to whom he will” (5:21, 26). As in chapter 5, John again identifies Jesus with God, but this time he is identified with YHWH, the wilderness provider. Jesus’ substantial claim and call to believe in him are not understood for what they truly are: deity and divine summons (cf. 4:14-15).

In response to Jesus’ claim and call, the people demand an authenticating sign from heaven, a manna miracle of Mosaic proportions (vv. 30-31; cf. 2:18). While in verse 14 the people are all too eager to hail Jesus as the Prophet, now a sign is required. Extra biblical sources from the second century confirm the expectation of a manna sign from the redeemer to come. This sign would be an indication of a new Exodus and a new age. “The treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those days” (2 Bar 29:8). “You will not find it [manna] in this age, but you shall find it in the age to come” (Midrash Mekilta, *Ex.* 26.25). In commenting on Ecclesiastes 1:9, Midrash Rabbah more clearly identifies a manna miracle with the Prophet like Moses: “As the first

redeemer caused manna to descend, as it stated, ‘Because I shall cause to rain bread from heaven for you (Exod xvi 4),’ so will the latter redeemer cause manna to descend.”³¹

The reader cannot help but see the irony in the crowd’s demand, for “the Lord” has just fed the multitude with bread and fish, though admittedly some arrived after the fact (vv. 22-23). As the provider of enduring food, Jesus emphatically clarifies the source of manna and true bread in verse 32: “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven.” In this verse Jesus affirms that his Father, not Moses, gave “you” bread in the wilderness. In addition, he identifies YHWH of the Exodus as “my Father.” After all, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat” (v. 31; Neh 9:15). It is clear from Nehemiah 9:5-6 and Exodus 16:4, 15 that YHWH “gave them bread to eat.” Incredibly, but consistent with the FG’s theology, both the Father and the Son are identified with YHWH of Moses’ Exodus writings (vv. 4-11, 27, 32). God alone is the provider of manna and of the true heavenly bread.

Jesus makes yet another association in his statement. By addressing his hearers as “you,” he implies that they stand as one with the wilderness generation. John confirms this association by the references to “grumbling” in verses 41, 43, 61 (cf. Exod 15:24; 16:2, 8, 9, 12; 17:3), and “our/your fathers” (vv. 31, 49). Their unbelief will continue to be manifested as the narrative proceeds, an unbelief that first dwelt in their wilderness fathers, and most certainly dwells in them. John shifts the imagery in verse 32, making a transition from Jesus as the provider of the enduring bread from heaven, to Jesus as the bread of life from heaven. He will broaden his use of imagery again in verse 51 to point to Jesus as the entire Passover meal and sacrifice, but for now the wilderness feeding of Exodus 16 remains in the background.

³¹ Cf. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, I-XII*, 265.

The True Bread from Heaven

John turns in verses 32-51 to reveal a related significance of the feeding sign in verses 1-15: Jesus is not only the provider of bread that never perishes, he himself (“I Am”) is the bread of God “who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (v. 33). Making this point more emphatically, Jesus again declares, “I am the Bread of life” (v. 48). In verses 35-40, the “life” (vv. 35, 40) that Jesus gives to the hungry is himself, he and he only is life-giving bread. “Whoever come[s] to him” (v. 37), “whoever looks to him,” and “believes in him” (v. 40), will have eternal life. Thus, Jesus not only gives life, but he is life, and life can be received only as people are intimately joined to Jesus by believing in him. The FG elaborates on the nature of this life by Jesus’ statements concerning the end-time resurrection. Eternal life is nothing less than resurrection life, which the Son will bring about “on the last day” (vv. 39, 40), though it has begun prior to the judgment.

Life is the prerogative of YHWH; he alone is the self-existent “I Am” who in and of himself has life (cf. 5:26). To be “I Am” is to have the sole power to “kill” and “make alive.” “See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive” (Deut 32:39a). The LXX renders Deuteronomy 32:39a as ἴδετε ἴδετε ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν θεὸς πλὴν ἐμοῦ· ἐγὼ ἀποκτενῶ καὶ ζῆν ποιήσω. The “I Am” is, and there is no other god beside him. He alone kills and makes alive. Thematically, John identifies Jesus with YHWH by Jesus’ claim to be the bread who is life, to be the one who gives life and raises the dead on the last day, especially as these assertions are combined with his “I Am” declarations in verses 20, 35, and 48, which will climax in 8:58. The life Jesus gives by faith will culminate on the last day when he oversees the final judgment and raises up “all that the Father gives him” (vv. 37, 39; cf. 5:19-29).

Beginning in verse 33, John emphasizes Jesus’ heavenly origin (cf. vv. 38, 42, 50, 58, 62): “The bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” This is another link to the wilderness feeding of Exodus 16:4: “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I am about to rain down bread from heaven for you.’” John identifies Jesus with YHWH not only by the divine life that he is and the eternal life that he gives,

but by where the Son, the bread of God, originates from heaven. In Exodus 16:4, the bread comes from heaven because YHWH gives it, just as he gives rain from heaven (Deut 28:12). YHWH speaks from heaven (Exod 20:22; Deut 4:36) because heaven is his holy habitation (Deut 26:15). No prophet is said to have come from heaven, and no mere angel is said to be or give life. By his provenance and descent, the FG understands Jesus to be God, YHWH of the Exodus feeding miracle.

The association of Jesus with YHWH of the Exodus events continues by way of Jesus' statement in verse 46: "Not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father." In response to the Jews' grumbling about Jesus' stated origin (vv. 41-42), Jesus reveals the necessity of his Father's effective drawing and teaching for people to come to him in faith (vv. 43-45). After quoting Isaiah 54:13, Jesus clarifies that though people must hear God's teaching and be taught by God in order to come to him, no one has ever seen the Father, except the Son who is from God (vv. 45-46). P. Borgen believes that in verses 45-46, John exegetes Isaiah 54:13 in consideration YHWH's manifestation at Sinai. In particular, Israel hears YHWH's voice but is unable to see him.³² While this may be so, Andreas Köstenberger points out that John is alluding back to 1:14-18, "which interprets the theophany at Sinai narrated in Exod 33-34."³³ It is in Exodus 33:18 that Moses pleads with YHWH: "Please show me your glory." In mercy, YHWH will allow Moses to see his "back" and hear the name of YHWH proclaimed (Exod 33:23; 34:5-8), but man shall not see YHWH's face and live (Exod 33:20, 23). Following with the Son's descent from heaven in verses 33, 38, John continues to identify Jesus with God. Since Jesus has come from heaven, he alone has seen the face of God, and lives. After all, he was face-to-face with the Father as the only begotten God (1:18).

³² P. Borgan, as noted in Andreas J. Köstenberger, "John," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 450.

³³ Köstenberger, "John," 450.

The Sacrificial, Passover Meal from Heaven

In verse 51, the imagery shifts from Jesus as “the bread that came down from heaven” to his “flesh,” which he “will give for the life of the world.” This is a movement from the wilderness feeding of manna and quail in Exodus 16, to the unleavened bread and lamb’s flesh of the Passover meal in Exodus 12. By the shift in typological references, the FG identifies Jesus as the means of salvation. He is the unleavened bread of the Passover meal and the sacrificial lamb of the Exodus deliverance: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh” (v. 51). Moreover, “unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood,” the eternal, resurrection life of God cannot be enjoyed (vv. 53, 54-55). Feasting upon the Son of Man ensures a mutual indwelling of Christ and the believer, and a sharing in the life of God, Father and Son (vv. 56-57). “This bread that came down from heaven” is categorically “not like the bread the fathers ate” because they “died” (v. 58). As the one who lives because of the living Father and the one sent by the Father, Jesus taught those in the synagogue at Capernaum that “whoever feeds on this bread will live forever” (vv. 57-59).

It is clear from Exodus 12:27 that the Passover lamb was a sacrifice: “It is the sacrifice of the LORD’s Passover.”³⁴ Each household was to “kill” their spotless, male lamb, applying the blood to the door posts and lintel, and eating the Passover meal (Exod 12:6). As they tangibly shared in the sacrifice of the lamb by eating all of it and sheltering under the smeared blood, YHWH passed over them in mercy while executing his judgment on the gods of Egypt and killing all the first born of the land (Exod 12:12). The Israelites will “kill” (LXX, σφάζουσιν)³⁵ the lamb and be spared as they take refuge under its blood, while YHWH “killed” (LXX, ἀπέκτεινεν) all of Egypt’s firstborn (Exod 12:6; 13:15).

³⁴ See also T. Desmond Alexander, *Exodus*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary, vol. 2 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017), 231.

³⁵ BDAG, 979. From σφάζω, which refers to the violent killing or sacrificial slaughter of a lamb in Rev 5:6, 12; 13:8.

YHWH accomplished his people's deliverance from divine wrath and Egyptian slavery, as Israel sacrificially slaughtered (σφάξουσιν) the lamb, smeared and took cover under the blood, and ate all of the Passover sacrifice.³⁶ By YHWH's command, those who endeavor to leave Egypt must take into themselves the lamb that was slaughtered. The paschal victim nourished the children of Israel for the impending journey out of slavery. This deliverance, in turn, brings them into the wilderness, into the presence of the holy One to feast with YHWH, the God of Israel (Exod 5:1). In light of this background, John says that Jesus, the bread from heaven, will "give" his own flesh "for the life of the world" (v. 51). His flesh is both a sacrificial offering and, metaphorically, a life-giving meal. The language is transitional and sacrificial, moving from wilderness manna imagery to Passover sacrifice and meal.

In his treatment of the role of Passover in the FG, Gerry Wheaton argues that "the essential element of the Passover tradition" expressed in verses 22-71 is that a person must eat "the paschal lamb in order to participate in the covenant community of the restored people of God."³⁷ People must eat the Passover meal by feasting on the crucified Son of God by faith, in order to take part in the new Exodus salvation brought by Jesus.³⁸ However, while acknowledging the legitimacy of substitutionary atonement in the FG, Wheaton does not believe that the Passover imagery in chapter 6 contributes in any way to the "atoning value of Jesus' death."³⁹ Rather, this facet of Jesus' death is more clearly attributed to Isaiah 53, where the "lamb that is led to the slaughter" is a sacrificial substitute which atones for sins (Isa 53:4-6, 10-12).⁴⁰ The significance of Jesus' sacrifice

³⁶ Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, 369.

³⁷ Gerry Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, Society of New Testament Studies Monograph 162 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 83.

³⁸ Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, 92.

³⁹ Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, 92.

⁴⁰ Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, 92.

as the lamb of Passover is “not atonement for sin but provision for the all-important paschal meal.”⁴¹

Wheaton argues rightly and persuasively for understanding Jesus as the Passover meal that must be eaten in order to participate in the new Exodus and the restored community of God. Yet, he does not establish that this is the sole understanding of the Passover imagery as applied by John; he does not address the nature of sacrifice, the slaughter of the lamb, and that its blood was applied to avert YHWH’s wrath. Conversely, T. Desmond Alexander suggests that participating in the Passover ritual consecrated Israel to YHWH by addressing sin. Citing J. Sklar, he asserts that “the sacrifice of the animal atones for the sin of the people in two ways. First, it provides a ransom from death and, secondly, the blood speared on the door posts purifies those in the house.”⁴² Eating the sacrificial Passover lamb and unleavened bread likely consecrated Israel as distinct from Egypt, and thus belonging to YHWH, especially in the case of the first born (Num 3:12-13).⁴³ This distinction is manifested when the Israelites exit Egypt as servants of YHWH with all of their firstborn alive; but wailing, darkness, and death mark the Egyptians from stable to throne. Israel bears God’s favor while unblemished lambs and rebellious Egyptians bear the brunt of divine destruction (Exod 12:29-32). If Alexander is correct, at least one significance of Passover imagery is the propitiation of God’s wrath for those who eat Jesus’ flesh and drink his blood. The major import of John 6:1-59 appears to be new Exodus participation by faith in Jesus as the Passover meal. The way to that meal is through the sacrifice of the lamb. The aversion of divine wrath through the shedding and appropriating of a substitute’s blood is the first part of YHWH’s deliverance, only then can the lamb be eaten, and the people go free.

⁴¹ Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John’s Gospel*, 125.

⁴² Alexander, *Exodus*, 232.

⁴³ Alexander, *Exodus*, 232.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to establish that John identifies Jesus with YHWH of the Exodus writings, and as the one consecrated by YHWH to give his flesh and blood for the life of the world. In the Passover feeding miracle of verses 1-15, John identifies Jesus with YHWH by his Exodus-like provision of bread and meat (cf. Exod 16). In addition, by the crowd's profession and action, the FG affirms Jesus to be the Prophet greater than Moses and the Messianic king, though the crowd is ignorant of the true meaning of these offices. In verses 16-21, the "I Am" pronouncement associates Jesus with YHWH of the Red Sea salvation, and the Mosaic Prophet who conducts YHWH's people safely to the other side of the sea (cf. Exod 13-15). Finally, verses 22-59 identify Jesus with YHWH of the Exodus writings by Jesus' Exodus assertions and wilderness allusions in the Bread of Life discourse (cf. Exod 16). He is the "living bread that came down from heaven" and the bread that he will give for the life of the world is his flesh. Thus, John identifies Jesus with YHWH of the Exodus writings, and the one consecrated by YHWH to give his flesh and blood for the life of the world. He indeed, is the Holy One of God.

CHAPTER 4
THE HOLY ONE OF GOD AND THE WILDERNESS
ROCK OF THE SPIRIT

The FG has called on Moses, who wrote of the Messiah, to bear witness to Jesus (5:46). The Feast Cycle begins with the reference to “a Feast of the Jews” and concludes with the Feast of Dedication (5:1; 10:22). Throughout this unit, Moses, the Law, the Mosaic feasts, and the Exodus events stand in the background of Jesus’ words and works (5:46-47; 6:4, 14, 20, 30-34; 41-51; 7:2, 16-24, 37-39, 40, 49-52; 8:12, 17-18, 31-34, 39-40; 53-59; 9:28-29). Chapter 10 may be considered an exception unless one sees Jesus’ claim to be the Good Shepherd as a reference to YHWH, “the Shepherd” of Israel (Gen 48:15; 49:24).¹ The Mosaic testimony to the Messiah found in the wilderness writings not only bears witness that Jesus is the Messiah, but it stands accusing Jesus’ contemporaries (5:45). They have set their hope on Moses while refusing to believe Moses. Therefore, the Feast Cycle functions as both a call to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (cf. 20:31), and a warning against rejecting the Messiah and the Mosaic witness to Jesus. In what seems to be the total abandonment of the Christ by the crowd, the disciples, and even one of the Twelve (6:24, 66, 70), Peter, confesses that Jesus is indeed “the Holy One of God” (6:69). This confession takes place in the context of Passover (6:4). Moreover, at the height of the Feast of Booths, and as the Pharisees and chief priests are seeking to arrest and kill Jesus (7:25, 30), Jesus identifies himself with YHWH, the source of the living water of the Spirit (7:37-39). As YHWH stood upon the stricken rock in the wilderness and provided water for the thirsty, so Jesus calls the thirsty to come to him in faith and receive the life-giving Spirit (Exod 17:1-7).

¹ Andreas J. Köstenberger, “John,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 462.

In this chapter I will demonstrate that John identifies Jesus as YHWH of the Exodus writings, and as the one consecrated to give the eternal life of the Spirit. The Evangelist accomplishes this by hailing Jesus as the “Holy One of God” in 6:69, and by Jesus’ claim to be the wilderness rock who gives the Spirit in 7:37-39. To this end I first examine the recent research concerning the ascription ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ, then give attention to the usage of the phrase in the Old and New Testaments.² Third, I will analyze 6:69 in the contexts of the Johannine corpus, the immediate setting, and the purpose of the FG. Fourth, I will examine Jesus’ claim in 7:37-39 in light of the immediate setting, the Feast of Tabernacles, and its correspondence with Exodus 17:1-7, along with other relevant OT texts. This analysis will demonstrate that the FG asserts Jesus’ divine, Messianic identity by Mosaic references and allusions, which upon further analysis are confirmed by the prophets’ use of the phrase.

Recent Interpretation of John 6:69

According to W. R. Domeris, “very little has been written on the subject of the Holy One of God. There are exegetical discussions in the commentaries and brief references in theological dictionaries, but these seldom amount to more than a few lines or at most a page.”³ His observation stands even though it was made thirty-five years ago. Seventeen years earlier, H. L. N. Joubert devoted twelve pages to exploring Peter’s confession.⁴ In this section I note the interpretations of recent commentators and summarize the findings of Domeris and Joubert.

² While ὅσιος can share some semantic domain with ἅγιος and is sometimes translated as “holy,” the research is focused on ἅγιος in the Greek NT and LXX.

³ W. R. Domeris, “The Holy One of God as a Title for Jesus,” *Neotestamentica* 19 (1985): 10.

⁴ H. L. N. Joubert, “The Holy One of God,” *Neotestamentica* 2 (1968): 57-69. See also Domeris, “The Holy One of God,” 10.

Commentators

Commentators have traditionally fallen into two groups when it comes to the interpretation of Peter's confession. Some see the title as Messianic, while others interpret it as more than Messianic. Joubert observes, "Some scholars took 'the Holy One of God' to be a Messianic title; on the other hand some believed it to be a designation of Deity."⁵ C. K. Barrett sees the title as essentially Messianic, while acknowledging that a "more than popular messiahship may be in mind."⁶ Thus, "Jesus is the emissary of God; in Jewish terms the Messiah, more generally, the Holy One of God."⁷ Raymond Brown also understands this to be Messianic, writing that Peter's confession "is the Johannine parallel to the synoptic scene at Caesarea Philippi."⁸ F. F. Bruce agrees, "'The Holy One of God' appears as a messianic designation in Mark 1:24. . . . This is a Johannine counterpart to the Caesarea Philippi incident in the Synoptic accounts (Mark 8:27-30 and parallels)."⁹ Similarly, Murray Harris believes the title to be purely Messianic. After citing Barrett, he explains his view in consideration of the textual variant rather than the context of the passage: it "was probably a messianic title (Barrett 307) since in the textual tradition it was expanded in various ways under the influences of passages such as 11:27, Mark 8:29, and Matt 16:16."¹⁰ These all agree that this is John's version of the Peter's Christological confession in Matthew 16:16: Jesus is "God's Holy One *par excellence*."¹¹

⁵ Joubert, "The Holy One of God," 58.

⁶ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: SPCK, 1962), 253.

⁷ Barrett, *St. John*, 253.

⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, Anchor Bible Commentary, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1966), 301.

⁹ F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 165.

¹⁰ Murray Harris, *John*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Nashville: B & H, 2015), 147. Similarly, Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 165.

¹¹ Harris, *John*, 147.

Other commentators believe the title to be more than Messianic. D. A. Carson understands it to be Messianic, but he observes that there is no evidence of this title being used in reference to the Messiah.¹² For Carson though, the title is more than Messianic. He asserts that at this point the apostles' pre-Holy Spirit understanding of Jesus is that he is "greater than a prophet, greater than Moses, non-less than 'the Holy One of God.'"¹³ In this vein, Herman Ridderbos writes, "The manner in which Peter now voices this [Messianic] conviction gives evidence of the totally new content this traditional title had acquired for the disciples. . . . Accordingly 'the Holy One of God' is not intended as a new messianic title alongside others but as a further description of this messianic identity."¹⁴ In fact, Peter's words place Jesus at God's "own side before all others and destined and separated for his service (cf. 10:36; 17:19)."¹⁵ Ridderbos not only recognizes the FG's high Christology, but asserts that the disciples are becoming "aware that in Jesus they are dealing in the most direct way with the reality of God."¹⁶ George Beasley-Murray concurs, stating that the title recognizes Jesus to be in a unique relationship with God and that this therefore "is no ordinary messianic designation."¹⁷

In his treatment of the New Exodus motif in John, Paul Coxen claims that the Holy One of God is a Messianic title, but he makes clear that there is no external support for this claim. With a view toward the FG's context, and quoting A. T. Lincoln, he proposes that the title "signifies that 'Jesus shares the Father's holiness' and has been set

¹² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1991), 303-4.

¹³ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 304.

¹⁴ Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), 249.

¹⁵ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 250.

¹⁶ Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 250.

¹⁷ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 2nd ed., Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999), 97.

apart by the Father in order to be sent into the world . . . as the new temple.”¹⁸ Though it seems best exegetically to not imply a new temple connection at 6:69, Coxen is correct in seeing more than a Messianic title based upon the Christology of the FG. Similarly, Leon Morris writes that the title is reminiscent of “the frequently occurring ‘the Holy One of Israel’” and “sets Him with God and not man.”¹⁹ Jesus is both the one who has come from God and the one sent by God (7:29). He shares in the Father’s holiness and makes it known in the world (1:14, 18).

Domeris and Joubert

Two journal articles give sustained treatment of the title: Joubert’s “The Holy One of God,” and Domeris’ “The Holy One of God as a Title for Jesus.” Joubert’s thesis is that the “confession makes clear that the eternal Sonship of Jesus is the soul of His Messiahship: in every detail of the Messiah-figure there beats the mighty pulse of Deity.”²⁰ Thus, Peter’s confession chiefly affirms that Jesus is God the Son; and as the Son who with the Father and Spirit is holy, Jesus is also “the Son in the messianic sense” and is therefore the true king, life-giver, mediating Son of Man, and YHWH’s suffering servant.²¹

Domeris argues that Peter’s confession is a response to the bread of life discourse in general and to the “descending Son of man specifically. Therefore, it ranks along with Son of man and Son of God.”²² Domeris sees a combination of functions and “suggests that both the Jesus of the fourth gospel and the high priest of the Jewish tradition

¹⁸ Paul S. Coxen, *Exploring the New Exodus in John: A Biblical Theological Investigation of John Chapters 5-10* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2014), 238. For a fuller treatment of this view see Paul M. Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2006), 145-76.

¹⁹ Leon Morris, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 390.

²⁰ Joubert, “The Holy One of God,” 66.

²¹ Joubert, “The Holy One of God,” 66.

²² Domeris, “The Holy One of God,” 13.

shared the function of the office of the Holy One—that of mediation and representation.”²³ Therefore, Jesus is the divine agent of God, the “messenger who comes from above.”²⁴ By calling Jesus the Holy One of God, Peter responds to Jesus in faith as the one who descended and has the words of eternal life, as the unique mediator and representative of God from heaven. Jesus, the Holy One of God, uniquely and authoritatively mediates and represents God.

Biblical and Theological Contexts

The phrase “the holy one of God” (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ) appears nowhere in the LXX. An equivalent expression appears in Psalm 106:16 (“the holy one of the LORD”), but the first word-for-word occurrence in the canon is Mark 1:24 with the parallel passage in Luke 4:34. In Mark, the title is voiced by a demon as Jesus confronts him and proceeds to liberate a possessed man from his power: “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” The final occurrence is 6:69. While on the surface this may seem to exclude an Old Testament background for Peter’s confession, the phrase “holy one” has a theologically rich Hebrew milieu.

The Old Testament

The Testimony of the OT is that God alone is essentially holy, or as Richard Bauckham observes, “Holiness belongs properly to God.”²⁵ David Peterson argues that, at its root, holiness is separation and “refers to the distinctiveness or otherness of God’s character, activities, and words. God’s holiness is particularly associated with his majesty,

²³ Domeris, “The Holy One of God,” 13, emphasis original.

²⁴ Domeris, “The Holy One of God,” 14.

²⁵ Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 254.

sovereignty, and awesome power (e.g., Exod 15:11-12; 19:10-25; Isa 6:1-4).”²⁶ By virtue that he alone is holy, separated from all creaturely things and set apart unto himself, only God can make something or someone holy. Therefore, people and things may be cleansed and consecrated by God and rightly called “holy.” Once something or someone has been cleansed and consecrated by God, that holy thing or holy person belongs especially to God for his holy purposes and service.²⁷

Peter Gentry, on the other hand, emphasizes that “holy” essentially means “consecrated” or “devoted” in both the Old and New Testaments, but not “moral purity” or “transcendence.”²⁸ Rather, his attributes of purity and transcendence testify that YHWH’s holiness cannot be manipulated, nor his judgment thwarted.²⁹ Thus, holiness is not fundamentally about separation, but about devotion and consecration to the righteous God. Accordingly, what is holy belongs to God; it is associated with God, near to God, and devoted to him, his worship, and his purposes. Gentry rightly recognizes that in Scripture, holiness “operates within the context of covenant relationships and expresses commitment.”³⁰ In light of both Peterson and Gentry’s treatment of holiness, and with a recognition of the way the FG uses the ἅγιος word group in relationship to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, it seems best to understand “holy” as primarily referring to being set apart to God and his righteous purposes. By implication, holiness then requires a separation from impurity and perversity.

In the OT, the phrase “holy one” most significantly refers to YHWH or Elohim (Job 6:10; Prov 9:10; Isa 40:25; 43:15; 49:7; Hos 11:9; 11:12; Hab 1:12; 3:3), who alone

²⁶ David Peterson, *Possessed by God: A New Testament Theology of Sanctification and Holiness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1995), 17.

²⁷ Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 19.

²⁸ Peter J. Gentry, “The Meaning of ‘Holy’ in the Old Testament,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 170 (October-December 2013): 401-2, 408, 416.

²⁹ Gentry, “The Meaning of ‘Holy’ in the Old Testament,” 417.

³⁰ Gentry, “The Meaning of ‘Holy’ in the Old Testament,” 417.

is the almighty, incomparable, and self-existing God; He is wholly devoted to his righteous purposes and covenanted with his people Israel. As God is so often referred to as “holy” and is perfect in holiness, it is no wonder that the entirety of earth brims with his majestic glory (Isa 6:3). Second, “holy one(s)” refers to an individual or individuals—human or angelic—who have been consecrated and commissioned by the Holy One (Deut 33:2, 3; 2 Kgs 4:9; Ps. 106:16; Dan 4:13, 17, 23; 7:18, 21, 22, 25, 27; 8:13, 24; Zech. 14:5). Of this non-deity grouping, the human beings referenced belong to God’s chosen people Israel and can refer to members of the covenant community such as prophets and priests. The non-humans are angelic messengers, members of the heavenly court, and heavenly warriors.

In 2 Kings 4:9 (LXX), Elisha is called ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιος, a “holy man of God” by the Shunammite woman who built him “a small room” so that he could lodge there on his ministry journeys. This phrase seems to be another way of recognizing his status as a “man of God” (v. 16), or prophet. Elisha is a “holy man of God” in that YHWH has set him apart to speak God’s Word on God’s behalf. Therefore, Elisha belongs to God as his authoritative messenger. This requires that Elisha be close to God in order to receive God’s words and thus to communicate those words faithfully.

Psalm 106:16 (Ps 105 in the LXX) reads, “the holy one of the LORD” (τὸν ἅγιος κυρίου). Psalm 106:16 is priestly. Here the reference is to Aaron, the anointed high priest of YHWH (Lev 8:1-30), and it looks back to Numbers 16:1-11 when Korah, Dathan, and others, rose up against Moses and Aaron concerning who was holy to the LORD; that is, who uniquely belonged to YHWH and was consecrated by him for priestly purposes. YHWH vindicated his holiness and that of Aaron by opening up the earth to swallow some, and by sending a consuming fire from heaven to incinerate others (Num 16:31-35; Ps 106:17-18). At this point, there is sufficient biblical evidence to say that YHWH’s “Holy One” can describe a priest, a prophet, the saints, or heavenly beings. More precisely, the

phrases referring to Aaron the high priest and Elisha the prophet best correspond with John 6:69.

The “Holy One of Israel” is a repeated designation of YHWH himself, especially in Isaiah, but also elsewhere. In 2 Kings 19:22, “the Holy One of Israel” is mocked and railed against by the Assyrian army who had besieged Jerusalem, but YHWH, the God of Israel, will drag them back to where they came from by hook and bit. In Psalm 71:22, the righteous sufferer praises “the Holy One of Israel” with harp, voice, and lyre for his faithfulness, judgments, salvation, and transcendence (vv. 15, 18-19, 23-24). Psalm 78:41 recounts how the wilderness generation “rebelled,” “tested,” and “provoked the Holy One of Israel” after he redeemed them and “performed his signs in Egypt” (v. 41).

Psalm 89 is explicitly Messianic. The author sings the praises of YHWH who covenanted with David, his “chosen one” (v. 3), and who is feared in the angelic council of “the holy ones” (vv. 5-7). The Davidic king, who belongs “to the Holy One of Israel,” is YHWH’s shield who protects his people (v. 18). The psalm reflects upon how YHWH anointed David with “his holy oil” (v. 20). As a result, David saves God’s people (vv. 20-25), bears the covenant love of YHWH, calls YHWH his own “Father,” and is made “the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth” (vv. 24-27). Though he will establish David’s throne and his offspring forever (v. 29), YHWH, his people, and his “anointed” are the objects of rejection, mocking, and international scorn (vv. 50-52).

In the Psalms and in 2 Kings 19:22 “the Holy One of Israel” is none other than YHWH, the one who is holy and is especially and uniquely known by his covenant people, Israel. He belongs to them as their holy God. The Holy One of Israel is exalted and transcendent, worthy of the highest praise and devotion (Ps 71:22), but the Holy One is also the object of scorn, mocking, and rebellion (2 Kgs 19:22; Pss 78:41; 89:18).

Nevertheless, YHWH who is the Holy One, will be vindicated as savior and judge before his people and among the nations.

Isaiah refers to the “Holy One of Israel” twenty-five times,³¹ with themes of transcendence, salvation, and judgment coalescing under the overarching theme of YHWH’s holiness and his close association with his Israel, his covenant people. According to Motyer, holiness in Isaiah is applied in the directions of transcendence, judgment, and salvation.³² An examination of the OT texts in this section shows the same lofty and lowly directions in the outworking of YHWH’s holiness. “The title,” says J. Alec Motyer, “is full of majesty and mystery: the God who is transcendent in holiness has brought himself into close relationship with a specified people whereby they may claim that he is theirs and he that they are his.”³³ The Holy One of Israel who threatens judgment in Isaiah 1–37, deals with sin and righteously reclaims sinners in chapters 40–55, and finally prepares an eternal state of holiness for the redeemed in chapters 56–66.³⁴

Twice in Hosea 11:9, 12, YHWH refers to himself as “the Holy One” who is “in the midst of Israel” and “will not come in wrath,” and “the Holy One” to whom Judah remains faithful and Ephraim is faithless. “Holy One” in verse 9 is a clear description of YHWH as “God and not a man.” YHWH’s holiness separates and sets him apart from man and from Israel, while also describing him as the one in their “midst” who “will not come in wrath.” “I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath” (v. 9). Again, in verse 12, “Holy One” is parallel to “God,” setting him apart from his people, while also affirming his closeness to Judah: “Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit, but Judah still walks with God and is faithful to

³¹ Isa 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:19; 30:11, 12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 41:14, 16, 20; 43:3, 14; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 55:5; 60:9, 14.

³² J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 17-18. Peterson refers to the “two sides to God’s holiness . . . in the exodus,” which are judgment and salvation. Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 18.

³³ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 18.

³⁴ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 18.

the Holy One” (v. 12). For Hosea, to be “the Holy One” is to be “God and not a man;” and God is none other than YHWH, who loved Israel and compassionately called his son out of Egypt (11:1, 4, 8). Yet, Ephraim endeavors to return to Egypt (12:1). This chapter, like Psalms 78 and 106, and Isaiah 43, 55, and 48, is laden with Exodus references and new Exodus anticipations.

There are two occurrences of the “Holy One” in Proverbs. The first occurs in 9:10, where the author uses parallelism to encourage and explain the fear of the LORD: “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.” Structurally, the proverb affirms that the Holy One is YHWH, the source of wisdom and insight for all who know and fear him. Once again in the OT, YHWH is singled out as the one who is holy by regarding him as such with reverence and awe; by knowing him truly as he is, one begins to possess in some measure what essentially belongs to YHWH who is holy: wisdom and insight. The phrase is used again in reference to God in 30:3, where Agur confesses that he is a brut who has not learned wisdom, “nor does [he] have knowledge of the Holy One.”

From the OT’s witness, God—YHWH, Elohim—is the “Holy One,” his angels and covenant people are sometimes called “holy ones,” and Aaron the high priest and Elisha the Prophet may also rightly be described as “a holy man of God” and “the holy one of the LORD.” YHWH is the Holy One in contexts of human rebellion and scorn, salvation, and judgment. He is the Holy One who has brought his people close, while also vindicating his holy name before his enemies. As the only one who is essentially holy, he both separates himself from the profane and consecrates others to be holy, enabling them to share in his holiness. Therefore, he commissions, preserves, and protects his holy ones as they do his holy will.

The New Testament

In the Synoptic Gospels, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ occurs twice, once in Mark 1:24 and once in its parallel passage of Luke 4:34. According to Mark, Jesus had been anointed by

the Holy Spirit at his baptism and verbally affirmed by his Father as his “beloved Son with [whom he is] well pleased” (1:10-11). “Immediately” the one loved by the Father and anointed by the Spirit is driven into the wilderness with the wild beasts and endures the temptation-assaults of Satan (1:11-12). After announcing the in-breaking of God’s kingdom and its demand for repentant faith, Jesus calls disciples, enters a synagogue, and authoritatively teaches on the Sabbath (1:14-22). In this context of authoritative teaching among God’s covenant people, an “unclean spirit” cries out from a possessed man: “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God [ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ]” (v. 24). Jesus then rebukes the “unclean” spirit, commanding it to come out (v. 25). The crowds are then amazed when the unclean spirit is expelled, noting Jesus’ authoritative teaching (vv. 26-27). R. T. France attributes the title to “the demon’s awareness that he has come up against a superior spiritual power,” which will prepare the way for the reader to rightly hear ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in 3:11.³⁵ Jesus, as the Holy One of God, has come up against the “unclean” spirit who is “polluted or contaminated, which in a Jewish perspective is tantamount to ungodly.”³⁶ Thus, like Samson, the “Nazarite to God” (Judg 16:17) who sought to expel the Philistines from Israel, Jesus comes to subdue his demonic foe, expel it, and deliver the enslaved man.³⁷

Johannine Literature

The exact phrase ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ occurs nowhere else in the Johannine corpus, rather it is unique to the FG.³⁸ That being said, a similar phrase is used in 1 John 2:20 and

³⁵ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 104.

³⁶ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 57.

³⁷ Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, 58.

³⁸ Though contested, I attribute Revelation to be among the canonical works of John the Apostle.

Revelation 3:7. In 1 John 2:20 it is not exactly clear if the “Holy One” (τοῦ ἁγίου) who anointed John’s readers is Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, or the Father. The closest referent is Jesus the Christ (v. 22), then the “Son and the Father” (v. 23). Verse 27 says that he who “abides” in the readers is the one who gave the anointing which “teaches you everything.” They are then commanded to “abide in him”; that is, in the one who gave the anointing and abides in them. It seems best, considering the context, the “abiding” language, and John 6:69, to understand Jesus Christ, the Son, to be the Holy One (v. 22)³⁹—especially given the author’s concern about the work of antichrist and antichrists who are directly connected to those who have “went out” and clearly are not a part the children who have been anointed by the Holy One (vv. 18-19). A direct contrast is made between the antichrist and the Holy One (the Christ), and the successionists and the anointed ones. In this case, the Holy One seems to be Messianic and more than Messianic.

The phrase ὁ ἅγιος appears in Revelation 3:7 and clearly refers to Jesus who is the “true one” and has the keys of “Death and Hades” (1:18), and of David, which is an allusion to Isaiah 22:22. In 6:10, the Sovereign Lord is addressed using a phrase similar to that found in 3:7. In 3:7, Jesus refers to himself as ὁ ἅγιος, ὁ ἀληθινός, while in 6:10 the martyrs cry out to the “Sovereign Lord” who is “holy and true.” David Aune and Leon Morris see this as a reference to God, even though the “the Lamb” is the one who has opened the seals in 6:1.⁴⁰ The phrase in 3:7 is obviously Davidic and Messianic. Yet, the context indicates that this is more than a messianic reference. According to Aune, τὰδε, by which the “holy one” introduces his message to the angel, was not used in koine Greek, but occurs at least 250 times in the LXX.⁴¹ David Matthewson observes that in the

³⁹ So also, Colin G. Kruse, *The Letters of John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans, 2000), 103.

⁴⁰ David E. Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 52a (Dallas: Word, 1997), 235; Leon Morris, *The Revelation of St. John*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 108.

⁴¹ Aune, *Revelation 1-5*, 141.

OT the phrase *τάδε λέγει* introduced “prophetic oracles spoken by God to the prophets” and is often translated “thus says the Lord.”⁴² Given the larger context of the Apocalypse where Jesus shares the divine identity and authority, and if God and not the Lamb is the recipient of the martyrs’ prayers in 6:10, then it seems clear that “holy one” is more than Messianic. The one who is holy and true is the divine Son of Man who, ever more alive, has authority over death (1:18) and speaks the very words of God to John.

The Fourth Gospel

To this point “holy one[s]” in the OT can refer to YHWH or his angels, to a priest or a prophet, or to the saints in general, but what is the import of Peter’s confession in 6:69? What does it mean that Jesus is *ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ* in the context of John 6:69 and in the Gospel as a whole? The FG reserves the ascription, holy, for the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In 17:11, Jesus calls the Father “holy” (*ἅγιε*) when he prays that the “holy Father” will keep the disciples in his Name. The Father “consecrated” (*ἡγίασεν*) the Son and sent him into the world (10:36); and the Father, who is holy, will “consecrate” (*ἡγιάσων*) the disciples (17:17). Second, John asserts that the Son is “the Holy One of God” (6:69), who, being “consecrated” by the Father (10:36), “consecrates” (*ἡγιάζω*) himself so that his disciples also (17:19) may be completely “consecrated” (*ἡγιασμένοι*) to God.

Lastly, the Spirit is called “holy” three times in John’s Gospel. The Baptist says that Jesus will baptize with the Holy (*ἅγιω*) Spirit in 1:33, and Jesus tells the disciples that the Father will send the Helper, the Holy (*ἅγιον*) Spirit in 14:26. In 20:22, the risen Jesus pronounces God’s peace on the disciples, sends them as the Father has sent him, and then breathes on them, commanding them to receive the Holy (*ἅγιον*) Spirit. Ironically, just prior to the last Passover in the FG (11:55), many go up to Jerusalem to “purify” (*ἡγιάσωσιν*) themselves before the Feast. All the while it is Jesus who consecrates (*ἡγιάζω*)

⁴² David L. Matthewson, *Revelation: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 18.

himself as a sacrifice, by which He will sanctify (ἡγιασμένοι) completely all who trust in him (17:19).

Several observations can be made when considering John's use of the ἅγιος word group in the FG. First, the Evangelist draws pointed attention to the holy unity of the Father, Son, and Spirit, as if to emphasize that God alone is holy (Isa 57:15). Holiness, therefore, is what belongs essentially to God; it "is what distinguishes God as 'other' than the world"⁴³ and sets him apart as wholly devoted to himself and his righteous purposes. Just as YHWH's Name is in the leading and guarding angel of the Exodus (Exod 23:21), so too the Father's Name has been given to the Son who is one with the Father (17:11). Second, though worshipers may "purify" (ἀγνίσωσιν) themselves in 11:55 to offer Passover sacrifices and eat the Passover meal, the Holy Father sanctifies his people in the truth through the atoning sacrifice of the consecrated Son. Lastly, this holiness is applied to the disciples by the Holy Spirit, sent from the Father and the Son (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

The setting of Peter's confession is firmly fixed within the matrix of the Sabbath and the Jewish feasts as prescribed in the Mosaic Law (5:1, 9-10; 6:4; 7:2, 8-11, 14, 37; cf. Lev 23:1-44). With unabashed hostility erupting from those who have set their hope on Moses (5:45), Jesus declares in 5:46 that "Moses . . . wrote of me." By this declaration, John endeavors to show in the chapters that follow how and in what way Moses wrote of Messiah. If John primarily writes evangelistically to Jews and God-fearing Gentiles, then showing that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, by the pen of Moses is a theologically and culturally calculated way to evangelize them.⁴⁴

Chapter 6 confirms this Mosaic evangelistic strategy by presenting Jesus in Exodus-like events and encounters; Jesus is the better bread from heaven and the greater

⁴³ Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*, 269.

⁴⁴ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 91. Cf. Andreas Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, Biblical Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 70.

Moses who lavishly and everlastingly provides for his people (6:1-15, 22-50; cf. Exod 16:1-36). Jesus is the “I Am” who saves his people on the sea (6:16-21; cf. Exod 14-15);⁴⁵ and he is the Passover Lamb who gives his own flesh and blood “for the life of the world” (6:51-59; cf. Exod 12:1-13:16). Peter’s confession brings to a crescendo this Exodus-laden mini-series. Though oddly enough, at this point there is a mass exodus away from Jesus by many of his “disciples” (6:66), and eventually even one of the twelve (6:70-71). Despite this desertion of the promised Son, Peter’s confession is bolstered by Jesus’ claim to be far better than the water-giving rock of the wilderness wonderings; from the stricken rock Jesus will provide the life-giving water of the Spirit (7:2, 37-39; cf. Exod 17:1-7).

Against the Exodus backdrop of God’s supreme OT acts of revelation and salvation, John draws the reader’s attention to the utter uniqueness of Jesus by hailing him as the Holy One of God. Jesus is the Prophet-Messiah who is YHWH of Moses’ Exodus writings; and he is the one consecrated by YHWH to give his flesh and blood for the life of the world (6:51). He alone gives eternal life by his words: “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life . . . you are the Holy One of God” (6:68-69). As the Jews continue to set their hope on Moses (5:45), Jesus in his day and John in his, continue to evangelize Israel by the pen of Moses.

Peter’s ascription in 6:69 is a response to Jesus’ question to the twelve in 6:67. His “disciples were grumbling” (6:61) and as “many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him” (6:66) because of the “offense” of his “hard word” (6:60-61), Jesus asked “the twelve, ‘do you want to go away as well?’” Peter’s confession of Jesus’ identity is in stark contrast to the assessment of others, a similarity shared with his confession at Caesarea Philippi (Matt 16:13-16; Mark 8:27-29). In the wake of the other disciples’ desertion, Peter, speaking on behalf of the twelve, states in verse 68 that only

⁴⁵ Though some interpreters do not understand v. 20 to be a self-referential claim to the divine name (Barrett, *St. John*, 234; Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 275-76; Harris, *John*, 128), it seems best in light of the context to understand Jesus as pronouncing the divine name in reference to himself (Beasley-Murray, *John*, 89-90; Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, 254-55; Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 217).

Jesus has “the words of eternal life.” Therefore, they can go to no one else and live eternally. Others may grumble and stumble over Jesus’ bloody Passover words, but the twelve have “believed and come to know that [Jesus is] the Holy One of God” (6:69).

Peter’s response echoes Deuteronomy 8:3. *ρήματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις* (“you have the words of eternal life”) in 6:68 recalls the LXX of Deuteronomy 8:3: *ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ παντὶ ῥήματι τῷ ἐκπορευομένῳ διὰ στόματος θεοῦ ζήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος*. “But upon/by all the words that come from/through the mouth of God man lives.”⁴⁶ Moreover, the first part of Deuteronomy 8:3 specifically mentions that the Israelites “did not know” (LXX, *οὐκ εἶδησαν*) about the manna/bread (*μαννα/ἄρτω*) with which YHWH fed them in the wilderness; they had not experienced nor knew of eating bread from heaven prior to this wilderness miracle. The whole point of God causing them to hunger and then feeding them with manna was to teach. This Exodus event was a sign signifying that the *ῥήματι* of God gives life and that the Israelites should trust, not test, God and his life-giving word.

In 6:69, Peter says that the twelve have “come to know” (*ἐγνώκαμεν*) that Jesus is the Holy One of God, the one who is the bread from heaven. Just as every word of YHWH’s mouth causes a man to live in Deuteronomy 8:3, so too Jesus has the words of eternal life; and just as the miracle manna was to teach Israel that man lives by every word from YHWH’s mouth (Deut 8:3), so too the feeding sign signified and taught that eternal life comes by the words of Jesus. Lexically and thematically chapter 6 sends the reader back to the wilderness writings of Moses where YHWH caused the Israelites to hunger, and then fed them miraculously with bread from heaven. He did this so that they would know that man lives by every word that comes from His mouth, and not by bread alone. Jesus fed the Israelites in 6:1-14, but tells them that that bread will “perish,” they need “the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give” (6:27). They too, like their wilderness fathers, cannot live by bread alone.

⁴⁶ My translation.

While others are abandoning Jesus, Peter confidently confesses that Jesus is “the Holy One of God.” Peter’s confession must be understood in two ways: (1) Peter’s sincere belief and profession that Jesus is God’s Holy One and (2) the FG’s assertion that Jesus is God’s Holy One. It is clear from the FG that the twelve do not grasp the implications of Jesus’ life, ministry, and death (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 14:26; 16:13). It is doubtful, as Joubert asserts, that this is an “acknowledgment of deity” by Peter.⁴⁷ Yet, it is also true that these men genuinely believed that Jesus is the Messiah who is greater than Moses, even if they misunderstand the nature and ministry of the Christ (17:6-8). For the twelve then, Jesus is God’s Holy One. He is the Messiah, the One who is “holy” by way of his unique relationship with the Father as demonstrated by his Exodus-like signs and life-giving words. This confession recognizes that Jesus was sent by God; he was consecrated and commissioned to bring life-giving words, just as Moses wrote (1:45; 6:14; Deut 18:15-19). Jesus will temper Peter’s zeal a bit (6:70-71), but his confidence in Christ and confession of faith in Jesus are substantial in light of the mass departure that has just occurred.

Peter’s confession must also be understood within the context of the FG as a whole and placed within the confines of its purpose statement in 20:31. Jesus’ warnings (6:70-71; 13:38), along with the misunderstanding present among the twelve in chapters 13–16, reveals that neither Peter nor the others fully grasped what he professed. Yet, for the Jewish and God-fearing audience of this Gospel, John’s placement of the confession gathers up all the Exodus echoes under the divine and Messianic title, Holy One of God. The Jewish feasts (5:1), Sabbath restoration and rest (5:9-10, 16, 18), glory of the only God (5:44), the Law’s accusation (5:45), Moses’ witnessing writings (5:46), the Passover meal (6:4), the mass feeding (6:11), the “I Am” on the sea (6:19-21), the bread from heaven (6:32-35), the wilderness grumblings (6:41, 43, 61), and the life-giving words of

⁴⁷ Joubert, “The Holy One of God,” 61. At this point it is difficult to know if Joubert is referring to Peter’s confession of deity as what Peter believed about Jesus, which is how I understand him, or as the Gospel’s confession of Jesus’ deity on the lips of Peter.

YHWH (6:68; cf. Deut 8:3) all proclaim that in Jesus YHWH has come down to save. It is in light of these Exodus words and works that Jesus is acclaimed as the Holy One of God, the only one who has “the words of eternal life” (6:68).

The Wilderness Rock of the Spirit

While Peter’s confession in 6:69 calls attention to the utter uniqueness of Jesus as YHWH and the One sent to give life, Jesus’ cry in 7:37-38 also identifies him as YHWH, and as the one consecrated to give the Spirit of life to those who believe. By drinking or believing in Jesus the thirsty person receives the Spirit. The Evangelist presents Jesus as the “fulfilment of symbolism pertaining to the Feast of Tabernacles.”⁴⁸ He is the source and giver of God’s eternal life; he is life, and the one commissioned to pour out the Spirit of YHWH on all who believe in him.

The Feast of Tabernacles Setting

The Feast of Tabernacles, the murderous plot of the Jews, an unbelieving family, and the world’s hatred of Jesus supply chapter 7 with its setting and context (7:1-2, 5, 7). The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths), or Ingathering as it is called in Exodus 23:16, is first set forth in the Law, and was one of three feasts that required all male Israelites to appear before the Lord (Exod 23:14, 17). This feast began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and celebrated the ingathering of the olive, grape, fig, date, and pomegranate harvests (Exod 23:16).⁴⁹ Moreover, the feast commemorated the Exodus, as YHWH “made the people of Israel dwell in booths when [he] brought them out of the land of Egypt” (Lev 23:43). With each harvest season Israel was to build and dwell in tabernacles, looking back to their sheltered wonderings in the wilderness. Like the other feasts, Tabernacles required specific sacrificial offerings each of the seven days, with the eighth day concluding the festival in a solemn assembly and culminating sacrifices (Num 29:12-38).

⁴⁸ Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, 420.

⁴⁹ Gary M. Burge, *Jesus and the Jewish Feasts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 69.

Built into the feast from the beginning was the expectation that the Lord would establish a centralized location where all of God's people would gather to celebrate his faithful provision (Deut 16:13-15). Israel's anticipation of YHWH's presence in a temple came to fruition under Solomon, and the consecration of the temple took place during the Feast of Tabernacles (1 Kgs 8:2, 20, 62-66). Thus, the feast was instituted in the writings of Moses to recall YHWH's past Exodus deliverance and wilderness provision, recognize his present provision of the harvest, and anticipate his choice of a "place" where he would dwell with his people in covenant blessing. Moreover, the reading of the Law played an important role during the feast. Every seven years, "in the year of release," the priests were to read the words of the Law "before all Israel" as they appeared before YHWH at the temple (Deut 31:10-13). Thus, YHWH's Exodus salvation and his self-revelation as Israel's God in their midst was a significant point of reference during the Feast of Tabernacles.

The feast, while retaining its Exodus overtones and tethered to the dedication of the temple and its altar, took on new significance after the Babylonian captivity. After returning from exile, the children of Israel gathered as one to Jerusalem. Under the leadership of Jeshua and Zerubbabel, they rebuilt the altar of the God of Israel "and they kept the Feast of Booths" and offered sacrifices (Ezra 3:4). Though the feast had been celebrated in the past (1 Kgs 8:2, 65), Nehemiah records that "all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so" (Neh 8:17). This aspect of building and living in tabernacles had somehow ceased to be a part of the celebration, but it was recovered through the reading of the Law during the rebuilding of the altar (Ezra 8:1-4; Neh 8:13-14). YHWH brought them out of exile, and as they set out to rebuild the altar, the walls, and the temple, the children of Israel did so as they remembered God's faithful provision in the Exodus.

The Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned again in Zechariah 14:16, 18, 19, where it is linked to the coming day of YHWH and takes on international significance. The festival is referenced in the context of the “living waters” that will “flow out from Jerusalem,” the recognition and worship of YHWH as king over the whole earth, and the hope of rain and holiness by the nations (Zech 14:8-21). In the OT, the Feast of Tabernacles is mentioned in relationship to the Exodus, the temple, and the Messianic age, all of which find expression and anticipation in the feast. As Wheaton observes, “Later Jewish tradition preserved both dimensions of this traditional background of the feast such that both the wilderness and eschatological backgrounds shaped the meaning and significance of various ceremonies as well as texts that describe them.”⁵⁰

In addition to building and dwelling in booths during the feast, the pouring of water on the altar became an essential part of Israel’s celebration. Daily the priests would collect water in a golden pitcher from the Pool of Siloam and march in solemnity through the Watergate to the altar at the temple. The priests would then pour the water out on the altar. The water ceremony was accompanied by the singing of Psalms 113–118, the shofar would be blown, and the pilgrims would shake their willow branches (*lulab*) as the Levites cried out, “O Lord save us.” These daily events coincided with the morning sacrifice and drink offering.⁵¹ The water rite and willow ritual took on greater significance on the seventh day.⁵² On the one hand, the Jews of Jesus’ day connected the water ceremony to YHWH’s provision of water from the rock in the wilderness, while also looking forward to the age of the Messiah, when YHWH would pour out his Spirit and “a stream from the sacred rock would flow over the whole earth.”⁵³ Later Jewish traditions, such as *Pesiqti*

⁵⁰ Gerry Wheaton, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John’s Gospel*, SNTS Monograph Series 162 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 129.

⁵¹ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 113.

⁵² Köstenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters*, 421.

⁵³ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 322.

Rabbati 52:3-6 and Tosephta *Sukkah* 3:3-12, reflect this interpretation of the feast. They understood the provision of water from the wilderness rock as a forerunner of the water ceremony, and as a foretaste of the life-giving water prophesied of in Ezekiel 47:1-9 and Zechariah 13:1; 14:8.⁵⁴

The Context of 7:37-39

Before examining the immediate context of 7:37-39, it is significant that John has already cast Jesus as YHWH, the divine Word who “tabernacled” (ἐσκήνωσεν) among men to reveal the Father’s glory, a glory full of covenant love and faithfulness, and overflowing in the fullness of grace upon grace (1:14, 16). In Jesus, the only God was revealing the unseen God (1:18). Just as YHWH revealed his glory at the tent of meeting (LXX: σκηνή μαρτυρίου) outside Israel’s camp (Exod 33:7-11; Lev 9:22-24; Num 16:19), and eventually in the wilderness tabernacle (LXX: σκηνή) fixed in the midst of his people (Exod 40:34-35), so John says that Jesus pitched his “tabernacle” in the middle of Israel.⁵⁵ Moreover, it is in this tabernacle that YHWH met with Moses in order to “speak” to him. Thus, the Exodus tabernacle had a revelatory function, and it pointed forward to the Word who was God and tabernacled in Israel to reveal God (1:1, 14, 18). In 7:37-39, Jesus positioned himself in the midst of Israel, inside of the temple (7:14, 28; 8:20) during the Feast of Tabernacles. As he stood up amid the people and cried out on the last day of the feast, there would have been tabernacles or “booths” scattered throughout the temple courts, in the squares at the Water Gate and the Gate of Ephraim, on the roof tops of many Jerusalem residences, and in their courtyards (Neh 8:16). Like the tabernacle of YHWH’s presence situated in the midst of the tents of the twelve tribes (Num 2:1-2), so Jesus, in his tabernacle of flesh, situated himself in the temple and among the tents of the people of Israel. There is therefore a lexical link and an historical parallel with the Feast

⁵⁴ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 322.

⁵⁵ See Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013), 643-46, for the identification of the tent of meeting and the tabernacle.

of Tabernacles (σκηνοπηγία), as well as theological import. In addition, if the wilderness rock became associated with the tent of meeting, as Numbers 20:6-8 seems to suggest, then Jesus' words take on more theological significance.

Questions and confusion about Jesus' identity continue into chapter 7 (vv. 5, 12, 15, 20, 24-29, 40-42, 45-52). John seeks to clarify this Messianic confusion for his audience when he answers the identity question through Jesus' teaching and call to faith. With the Feast of Tabernacles at hand, Jesus' brothers betray their misunderstanding of his identity and their unbelief in him as the Christ, the Son of God (7:1-9). Though they urge Jesus to show himself to the world during the feast, they remain unconvinced about him and unbelieving in him. The world hates Jesus, but not his brothers; their time is always here, but his time has not yet come.

In verses 10-13, Jesus privately goes up to the feast and encounters the muttering people's mistaken opinions. Some are quietly saying that he is a good man, others are convinced that he is leading the nation astray, but no one will make their opinions public just yet because the Jews are seeking to kill him (7:1, 11, 25). In the middle of the feast Jesus begins to publicly teach the people in the temple (7:14-24). In response to the questions about his teaching and authority, Jesus says that he speaks by God's authority and that his teaching is not his, but it belongs to God who sent him (7:15-17). He then testifies (cf. 7:7) against the crowd, accusing them of breaking the law of Moses in seeking to murder him (7:19; cf. Exod 20:13). They seek his death even though he speaks the truth for the glory of God (7:18). Certainly, Moses gave them circumcision in the Law, which inflicts a wound in the body to consecrate men to God; and no doubt they "will circumcise a man on the Sabbath" (7:22). Yet, to their amazement, Jesus "made a whole man's body well" on the Sabbath, but they are angry with him (7:21-23). In response, Jesus urges them in 7:24 to "not judge by appearances, but [to] judge with right judgment."

The issue of Jesus' identity and origin comes to the surface again in 7:25-36. The "people of Jerusalem" are surprised that Jesus is "speaking openly," even though the

authorities are trying to kill him. Quite confident of their ability to make right judgments, they wonder if the Jews think Jesus is the Christ, while they themselves rule out this possibility. For they “know where this man comes from” (7:27), therefore he cannot be the Christ. Yet Jesus proclaims that they do not know the one who sent him; thus, they cannot truly know who he is or where he is from (7:28-30). Once more, Jesus’ words divide up his hearers. Many believe in him, that he is the Christ, because they think it impossible that one could do more signs than Jesus (7:31), but as 7:32-36 goes on to show, many still have no idea where he came from or where he is going. With his departure approaching, Jesus excludes the unbelieving from ever finding him or coming to him (7:36).

Christ’s Identifying Call: John 7:37

Mindful of the questions and confusion concerning Jesus’ identity in verses 1-36, verses 37-39 should be read as a call to faith in Jesus—a call which identifies him with YHWH and the one through whom YHWH would give the Spirit. Jesus’ crying call is a clarifying assertion of his divine identity and Messianic commission. Just as John identifies Jesus as YHWH by Peter’s confession in 6:69, so now he identifies him as YHWH by Jesus’ call to the thirsty. Moreover, just as the Holy One of God has been consecrated to give eternal life by his words (6:68-69), Jesus has been consecrated to give living water; that is, the Spirit who gives life (7:37, 39; cf. 1:33-34; 3:5; 13:20; 15:26; 16:7; 20:22). By calling for the thirsty to come to him and drink (believe), Jesus identifies himself with YHWH of the Law and the Prophets, who alone gives abundant water freely, the life-giving Spirit without price (Neh 9:15, 20; Ps 78:15-16; Isa 12:3; 55:10-11; Jer 2:13; 17:13; Ezek 47:1-2, 8-9; Joel 2:28).

Like YHWH, Jesus is the source of water. Though there is some debate as to which day is referenced in verse 37, the “last” and “great day” of the feast is likely the

eighth day, a Sabbath.⁵⁶ Another feast has concluded and the water pouring ceremonies would have been on the minds of pilgrims, with no immediate fulfillment of its promises in sight. Now in verse 37, Jesus claims to be the source of living water; Jesus is the Son of God who baptizes with or pours out the Holy Spirit (1:33-34); and the Spirit gives life, causing people to be born from above (3:5-6). Therefore, Jesus calls for those who thirst for the life-giving waters of the messianic age, the age of the Spirit, to come to him in faith (v. 38a). They cannot come to him and do; they must come to him and “receive,” which for John means they must come and believe in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (cf. 1:12; 20:31).

Verse 37, apart from Jesus’ remark in verse 38 concerning what “the Scripture has said,” draws upon the OT references that have given the Feast of Tabernacles its initial symbolism. With this symbolic and scriptural background, Jesus’ cry to the thirsty identifies him with the wilderness rock of Exodus 17:1-7 and with YHWH who is the only source of living water. In Exodus 17:1-7, the rock was the source of water, and soon after became a title for YHWH. The thirsty Israelites drank from this rock and YHWH identified himself with it when he stood upon it: he “made streams come out of the rock and caused waters to flow down like rivers” (Exod 17:6; Ps 78:16).

Jewish tradition links the Feast of Tabernacles with the provision of water from the wilderness rock of Exodus 17:1-7, but at first glance nothing in the text of John 7:37-39 seems to make that connection.⁵⁷ However, on further analysis it becomes apparent that Jesus himself (and thus John) is alluding to Exodus 17:1-7. With the heightened awareness of YHWH’s provision of water from the rock, Jesus’ crying call would be understood to allude to that Exodus event and point forward to the eschatological promises of the prophets. Upon closer examination of John 7:37-39 and Exodus 17:1-7, elements

⁵⁶ See Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 321-22, for the reasons to understand that the last and great day is the eighth day. See also his defense for the “believer” within whom flows rivers of living water (323-29).

⁵⁷ Cf. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 113-14.

of the Exodus event can be discerned in 7:37-39. Both events share similar thematic content in their respective contexts: sea crossings, Sabbaths, waters that heal and do not heal, miraculous feedings and bread from heaven, hostile interactions with the crowds by God's appointed prophets, grumbling by the crowds, and the element of thirst. In Exodus 17:2-4, Moses cannot satisfy the peoples' thirst, only YHWH can provide water, but Jesus calls the thirsty to come to him and drink in 7:37. Moses cries to the Lord in Exodus 17:4, but Jesus cries out to the thirsty, calling them to come to him and drink (7:37).

A trial motif is present in both texts.⁵⁸ In Exodus 17, Moses is threatened with execution and YHWH is accused of abandonment; YHWH then calls for the elders to be assembled at the rock for judgment. Moses, the judge of Israel, strikes the rock upon which YHWH stands (Exod 17:4-6; cf. 18:13; Deut 8:15). Only then does water pour forth and satisfy the thirsty masses (Exod 17:6). In the FG, Jesus faces the same threat of execution from the chief priests and Pharisees because he has blasphemed and broken the Sabbath (7:1, 25, 45-52; cf. 5:18). Though he will elude them for some time, the Jewish authorities eventually arrest Jesus, and he will stand trial before Pilate. Pilate finds no guilt in him, but the chief priests and Pharisees succeed in their accusations and Jesus is condemned, sentenced, and crucified (18:38; 19:13-19). As the rock produced water only when struck by the rod of divine judgment, so it is only when Jesus is lifted up on the cross and glorified that the Spirit of life is poured out (3:14-15; 7:39; 19:34; 20:20-23).

⁵⁸ See Alexander, *Exodus*, 334, and Stuart, *Exodus*, 388, n.180 for a trial motif in Exod 17:1-7, and Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospels and Letters*, 437-41, for the trial motif in the Gospel of John.

Table 2. Narrative comparison of Exodus 17:1-7 and John 7:37-39

Exodus 17:1-7	John 7:37-39
Exodus 17:1-7 follows the sea crossing, healing waters, manna miracle, Sabbath rest, Moses' dialogue with Israel and YHWH, and Israel's grumbling.	John 7:37-39 follows the Sabbath healing and the waters that could not heal, the bread from heaven sign, the sea crossing, Jesus' dialogue with Israel and Bread of Life discourse, and the people's grumbling.
The people thirst for water, but Moses cannot give them water (v. 3).	Jesus calls to those who thirst because he gives living water (v. 37).
Moses cried out to the Lord (v. 4).	Jesus cried out to the crowds (v. 37).
Moses is threatened with execution by the people (v. 4).	The Jews are seeking to put Jesus to death (vv. 1, 25).
There is a trial motif with the elders of Israel and Moses acting as judges and YHWH as the accused (v. 5).	There is a trial motif with the Jewish authorities acting as judges and Jesus as the accused (vv. 26, 45).
YHWH stands on the rock before the elders; he provides water for the thirsty when the rock (and YHWH?) ⁵⁹ is struck by the rod of judgment (vv. 5-6).	Jesus stands and calls the thirsty to come to him and drink/believe (v. 37). He provides the living water of the Spirit, who will be given when Jesus is glorified through judgment and exaltation (vv. 38-39).
Israel tests YHWH (and Moses), doubting his presence and promise to provide (v. 7).	The crowd is confused; some doubt that Jesus is the Christ, the prophet like Moses (vv. 31, 40-42), who is the manifestation of the saving and unseen God, and source of eternal life (1:1, 14, 18; 20:28, 30-31).

Like YHWH, Jesus provides flowing water for the thirsty. In light of this Exodus event when YHWH satisfied his thirsty unbelieving people, he eventually took the name "Rock" for himself. He is the "Rock" who, in contrast with his corrupt and crooked people, is perfect in all he does, his ways are righteous, and he is faithful, sinless, just, and upright (Deut 32:4-5). He is the "rock" of Israel's salvation, though they forsook him and scoffed at him (Deut 32.15). God is the "rock" that fathered Israel, yet they ignored him and forgot the one who gave them birth (Deut 32:18). Therefore, "their rock" gave them up in defeat to a nation far weaker, a nation that conquered Israel without divine aid (Deut 32:30-31). In the Law, "rock" came to refer to YHWH as the faithful provider and protector, the one who provided water for the thirsty in the wilderness but was rejected by Israel.

⁵⁹ For the view that YHWH himself was struck in judgment, see Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 1988), 109-28.

The psalms present YHWH as a rock of refuge and salvation, the righteous redeemer who hears the cries of his people.⁶⁰ Psalm 78, like Deuteronomy 32, rehearses God's faithfulness and salvation, especially in the Exodus events, as well as Israel's persistent rebellion throughout its history. The psalm culminates with God's election of Judah, Mount Zion, and David. The rebellion that characterizes Israel's relationship with God throughout the psalm finds its resolution in his rejection of Joseph and Ephraim, and his choice of the Davidic king (Ps 78:67-72). Moreover, the psalm recounts God's gift of abundant water from the rock and designates him as the "rock." In response to his judgment, "they remembered that God was their rock, the Most High their redeemer." The ascription here equates "rock" with "God," the one who redeems from death, a death which was the result of God's judgment (Ps 78:32-34). Psalm 78 reveals that this Exodus event played a polemical role in Hebrew history. It revealed the pattern of God's faithful provision and salvation, while contrasting YHWH's faithfulness with Israel's persistent rejection and unbelief. As Psalm 95:7-11 confirms, Meribah and Massah served as a warning for the flock of God for generations to come (cf. Heb 3:7-4:13).

Like Psalm 78, Psalm 42 combines the concept of thirst with God as "my rock." Though the wilderness event of water from the rock is not explicitly mentioned, it may be that this Exodus background is in view. In verses 1-2 the psalmist is thirsty: "As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" In verse 9, it is God who is the psalmist's "rock." In thirst and affliction, the psalmist longs to drink from God and quench his thirst in God, who is his rock; but like the Egyptians crossing the Red Sea, he seems only to experience the waves and waters of divine wrath (v. 7). Still thirsting yet drinking nothing but waves, the salty water of divine wrath, the psalmist resolves to hope in God. So, in Psalm 42, YHWH is the rock who is also the flowing streams of water, the

⁶⁰ Cf. Pss. 18:2, 46; 19:14; 28:1; 31:2-3; 62:1-2, 6-7; 71:3; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22.

very fountain of life (cf. Ps 36:9). In Psalm 78, YHWH is the rock who provided overflowing streams of water for the thirsty from the wilderness rock.

Isaiah also calls YHWH a rock and the source of salvation's water. In Isaiah 8:6-8, the people of Samaria and Judah will be swept away by the raging waters of judgment because they "refused the waters of Shiloah that flow gently" (Isa 8:6). Shiloah's waters signified the Davidic dynasty and the city of Jerusalem that YHWH has chosen for himself. To "refuse the waters" was to refuse YHWH.⁶¹ YHWH is indeed a "sanctuary" in times of judgment, but he will also be "a stone of offense and rock of stumbling," and he will crush those who stumble over him in unbelief (Isa 8:14; cf. Matt 21:42-44; Rom 9:32-33; 1 Pet 2:4-8). Yet once again, as in the Exodus, YHWH will lead Israel across the "Sea of Egypt" and they "will draw water from the wells of salvation" as they call upon YHWH, who himself has become their salvation (Isa 11:15-16; 12:1-3). He alone is the source of the saving waters and cries out, "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. . . . Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live" (Isa 55:1a, 3a).

In these chapters, YHWH is a "rock" and is clearly identified as the source of "water" and life, that is, "salvation." This anticipates a new Exodus in which the "rock" will be an offense and a sanctuary. On that day, YHWH himself will freely provide the waters of salvation for the thirsty. Though rejected and despised, he will open up a "fountain . . . for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to cleanse them from sin and uncleanness" (Zech 13:1). Indeed, "on that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem" (Zech 14:8).

Verse 37 clearly associates Jesus with YHWH of the Exodus writings who alone is the source and provider of living water; he is the rock of provision, refuge, and salvation. The rock was often rejected by Israel yet hoped in by a faithful remnant. By the call to the thirsty during the Feast of Tabernacles, the FG calls the feast to bear witness to Jesus,

⁶¹ Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 91.

claiming that he is the fulfilment of Tabernacles.⁶² In Jesus, what the wilderness rock of water prefigured, and what the Feast of Tabernacles anticipated, has now come to fulfilment when “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (1:14). No longer is the anticipation of life-giving water far off—it is a present reality for all who thirst.⁶³

The Promise of the Spirit: John 7:38-39

In consequence of drinking from (that is, believing in) Christ, the thirsty will “receive” the Spirit (vv. 38, 39a). The Spirit would soon be given by way of Jesus’ glorification (v. 39b). Jesus’ declarative promise is affirmed by the witness of Scripture (v. 38). At this point there is disagreement among interpreters concerning two issues in verse 38. First, what Scripture is Jesus referring to? Second, from within whom will living waters flow? The proposed answers to the second question can be divided into two main interpretations: the traditional view understands the water to flow from within the believer but maintains that Christ is the source of living water; and the Christological view sees the water flowing from within Christ, not the believer.⁶⁴ For the reasons articulated by Carson, including the textual support and the Evangelist’s literary style, the traditional view is preferable.⁶⁵

By believing in, or drinking from Jesus, the believer will receive the Spirit and thus the eternal life of God will flow within him. That the thirsty person is made to live everlastingly by the gift of the Spirit is confirmed elsewhere in the Gospel. Jesus’ words in 3:5-6 and 6:35 show that the birth from above is a consequence of “water and the Spirit,” and “it is the Spirit who gives life” as Jesus speaks words that “are spirit and life.” In

⁶² Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple*, 160.

⁶³ Dale C. Allison, Jr., “The Living Water,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (1986): 148.

⁶⁴ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 323.

⁶⁵ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 323-26. See also Hoskins, *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple*, 160-63; Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, 272-74. For the Christological interpretation, see Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, 320-24.

addition, 4:14 understands the believer not to be the source of the water, but the reservoir of the life of the Spirit: “whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

In view of the traditional interpretation, what Scripture passage(s) is Jesus referring to, and does this reference(s) support the claim that Jesus is identifying himself with YHWH of the Exodus writings? While there are a number of allusions to the Law and the Prophets in these verses, Carson has proposed that Nehemiah 9:15, 19-20 is a more precise OT background for 7:37-39, in that it draws upon the same theological and historical themes and grounds Jesus’ claim “within the context of the Feast of Tabernacles.”⁶⁶ To support his claim, Carson notes Nehemiah’s clear references to the rock of water in Exodus 17 and Numbers 20, the connection of the manna and water with the giving of the law (or “word”) and provision of the Spirit—something that John seems to connect in chapters 6–7—and the further connections of water and Spirit in secondary passages to which John alludes.⁶⁷ The Christological significance is well-defined when Jesus claims that “he alone can provide the real drink, the satisfying Spirit.”⁶⁸ As the summary of secondary allusions below will demonstrate, this is something that only YHWH can and will do.

During the exile in Babylon, Ezekiel prophesied of a day to come when YHWH, because of his holiness, would gather his people back into their land, sprinkle clean, sanctifying water on them, and put his Spirit within them (Ezek 36:24-27). The water imagery continues to be associated with the Spirit of YHWH, but by way of pouring, not sprinkling. He will reveal his face to his people by “pour[ing] out [his] Spirit on the house of Israel” (Ezek 39:29). The Spirit of YHWH brings life to the dead, as

⁶⁶ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 326-28.

⁶⁷ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 327-28.

⁶⁸ Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 328.

dramatically pictured in Ezekiel 37:1-14, where the word and Spirit of YHWH bring life to his dead and defeated people. In his vision of the end-time temple, Ezekiel captures the Messianic blessing of life—life that results from the water which flows as a life-giving river from the sanctuary (Ezek 47:1-12). Just as “a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden,” so from the new temple water will flow into the city and the sea, creating life and culminating in a restored Eden-like world (cf. Gen 2:10-14). The water gives life, food, and “healing” because it flows from the sanctuary where YHWH dwells (Ezek 47:12).

With Ezekiel, Joel envisions the giving of the Spirit in the last days as life-giving water. This is illustrated by the words “pour out” (Joel 2:28).⁶⁹ YHWH is the source of the Spirit as indicated by verses 28-29: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. . . . Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.” The giving of the Spirit coincides with God’s promise in verse 32 that “all who call on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” Just as YHWH had “poured down for [them] abundant rain, the early and the latter rain” in verse 23, so he would assuredly pour out his Spirit on all flesh. In Ezekiel 36:25, 27, the Spirit is linked to water that cleanses; in Joel 2:23 the Spirit is linked to “rain” water that brings life.

After the exiles began to return to Jerusalem, the Feast of Tabernacles marked the rebuilding of the altar (Ezra 3:1-5). Later, when Nehemiah came to oversee the rebuilding of the Jerusalem wall, the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated with new vigor. Through the reading of the Law the people rediscovered the wilderness practice of building and dwelling in tabernacles (Neh 8:13-18). This practice seems to have been forgotten by the nation and left behind in the wilderness when Israel settled in the Promised Land (Neh 8:17). As the Levites read from the Book of the Law and praised the glorious name of YHWH, they connected the manna miracle and rock of water with YHWH’s giving of his “good Spirit to instruct them” (Neh 9:3-5, 20).

⁶⁹ Cf. Allison, “The Living Water,” 144, who also makes this observation and notes the obvious connection between the Spirit and water’s cleansing significance in Scripture.

Finally, Zechariah speaks of the day of cleansing when a “fountain” would be opened up for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (Zech 13:1). In that day YHWH would “pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him” (Zech 12:10a). “On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem . . . and the LORD will be King over all the earth” (Zech 14:8-9). Both the pouring out of a gracious Spirit and the outflow of living waters find their epicenter in Jerusalem. Moreover, the Feast of Tabernacles figures prominently in this prophecy; it connects the prophetic events to the Jerusalem temple and reminds the worshipers of God’s provision of rain and protection from plague (Zech 14:16-18; cf. Deut 16:13-15).

Conclusion

By Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Holy One of God in 6:69, and Jesus’ call to the thirsty to come to him and drink of the life-giving Spirit in 7:37-39, John identifies Jesus as YHWH of the wilderness writings and the One consecrated to give eternal life. He is the source of the life-giving Spirit, which YHWH will pour out on the thirsty when Jesus is glorified. In declaring that Jesus is the source of the Spirit, the FG identifies him with YHWH of the Mosaic witness. This assertion is confirmed by the Gospel’s statements that the Spirit will proceed from the Father and the Son (13:20; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7); but Jesus must first be glorified (7:39). He must be lifted up like a cursed serpent, and he must lay his life down in death for sinful sheep; only then will he take it up again in resurrection life (3:14-15; 10:11, 17). Only in this way can the eternal life of the Spirit be received by those who believe. Therefore, in love for a sinful world, God gave his only begotten Son. He sent his Son into the world that whoever believes in him might be saved from perishing and have eternal life (3:16-17). Yet, the Lord’s message and messenger of life has caused division from early on in his ministry. In 7:40-52, the words of the Lord Jesus sift through the crowd and reveal Messianic professions, the uncertainties and

doubts of the people, pretensions, and the animosity of the religious leaders. To this day, his words continue to sift and sort sinners, and call the thirsty to come to him and drink.

CHAPTER 5

THE ECCLESIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In this thesis I have argued that by hailing Jesus as the Holy One of God, the FG identifies him as YHWH of Moses' Exodus writings, and as the One consecrated to give eternal life. Peter's confession in 6:69 functions as a climactic, comprehensive assertion about the one of whom Moses wrote. The title "Holy One of God" speaks to Jesus' unique identity as YHWH, and as the One uniquely consecrated by the Father for God's salvific, life-giving purposes. I argued that chapters 5–7 present Jesus as speaking YHWH's life-giving words and performing his redemptive works in Exodus-like fashion. As one reads the FG, keeping Jesus' words about Moses' writings in mind, a discernable pattern of Exodus events becomes clear in the ministry of Jesus.

Yet, what are some implications of this thesis for the church? As argued, the Mosaic witness is to the prophet like, and yet utterly unlike, Moses. After all, Jesus is no mere prophet, he is truly God and truly man; he is the Messiah who is YHWH of the Exodus, and the One sent by the Father to give the words and water of life. From John's prologue to Thomas' confession, Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the unseen God manifested in human flesh, the Word eternal and incarnate. So how should the church appropriate the doctrine of Christ's deity and humanity as witnessed to by Moses and revealed by John's witness in the FG?

The Gospel's stated purpose is found in 20:31: "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." While much could be said by way of application about the church's witness to Jesus to an unbelieving world, I will confine these implications to the gathered

worship of the church, which is a facet of the discipling intent of the Evangelist.¹ In addressing worship, I will focus on John's use of the term προσκυνέω as it appears in 4:1-26 and 9:38, and its relationship to Jesus' identity as the God-Man. I will then examine Thomas' confession of Jesus' divine-human identity in 20:28.

The Church's Gathered Worship

Given the nature of the FG, there are no formal church gatherings recorded. Yet, John contributes much to the gathered worship of the church. One only needs to think of the early church councils and creeds, which were formulated in response to rising Christological heresies, to recognize the importance of John's Gospel in the articulation of biblical Christology. As D. Moody Smith notes, "The ancient church's christological controversies look something like an exercise in the development of Johannine thought. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed . . . obviously centers upon the doctrine of Christ, christology, and uses terminology that is largely Johannine to set forth this doctrine."²

In what follows I address four aspects of the church's gathered worship: doxology, confession, preaching, and hermeneutics. I will argue that as the church gathers to ascribe glory and praise to God (doxology), articulate and affirm God's truth about Christ as revealed in Scripture (confession), and declaratively explain and apply God's Word in light of the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and return of Jesus Christ (preaching), Jesus' identity as truly God and truly man must intentionally be at the center of the church's gathered worship. Each of these elements of congregational worship are undergirded and informed by a proper understanding of God's prophetic and progressive revelation in Scripture. Moreover, as made clear in texts such as Luke 24:44-49 and

¹ Cf. William F. Cook, *John: Jesus Is God* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2016), 13.

² D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, *New Testament Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 174. See also Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son, and Spirit: The Trinity in John's Gospel*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 24 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008), 111.

Hebrews 1:1-2, the Law, Prophets, and Psalms must always be interpreted in the context of God's final, climactic word in his Son, who is revealed in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles (hermeneutics). He alone "is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature" (Heb 1:3a); and as "the man Christ Jesus," he is the only "mediator between God and men" (1 Tim 2:5).

Trinitarian Doxology

The church gathers to ascribe glory and praise to the triune God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet, faithful worship is only possible through Jesus Christ, who himself receives worship and glory. As the Holy One of God, the One who is truly God and truly Man, Jesus is the meeting place or locus of genuine worship (2:21), the means of worshiping the Father "in spirit and in truth" (4:19-26), and the One who receives worship from those he has made to see (9:38). These texts will be examined in view of this thesis, and their doxological implications for the church's gathered worship will be drawn out.

The church gathers to meet and worship the Father in Christ the Son. The point of 2:13-22 is that Jesus, by his death and resurrection, raised up God's abiding, eschatological temple. Jesus, consumed with zeal, evacuated the Jerusalem temple by force when "he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money changers there" (2:14). His Father's house had been polluted, turned from a place of prayer to a place of profit (2:16; cf. Mark 11:17). When the Jews asked Jesus to give evidence of divine sanction for his actions, he responded, "destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (2:19). John explains in verse 21 that "he was speaking about the temple of his body." According to Hebrews, the Jerusalem temple was merely a copy and shadow of the temple to come (Heb 9:23-24; 10:1). With zeal, and with divine authority as God's Messiah, Jesus brought the OT period of redemptive history, along with its Jerusalem

temple worship, to an end. Moreover, he inaugurated the everlasting locus of worship in “the temple of his body” (2:21; cf. 4:21, 24; Ps 69:9).

The temple imagery that Jesus fulfills cannot be separated from the sacrificial imagery that also finds fulfillment in the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (1:29). This Lamb of God is also the Spirit-bearing Son of God (1:29, 32-34, 36). Thus, Jesus’ glorification in death was a sin-atonement, wrath-absorbing sacrifice which brings forgiveness of sins and consecration to God (cf. 17:17, 19; 19:29, 34-37; 20:23). In his “lifted up” death Jesus will judge this world and the tyrant of this world, while drawing all men to himself (12:31-33). As John makes clear, Jesus is the way to God, the truth of God, and the life of God. No one comes to the Father except through him (14:6).

The place of worship receives further treatment in Jesus’ interaction with the woman at the well. In 4:19, the conversation seems to take a turn from the water of everlasting life to the proper place where people are to meet God in worship. However, given the FG’s concern with living water and the eschatological temple, which are brought together in Ezekiel 47:1-12, water and worship are not separate concerns. Setting aside the disagreements about location, Jesus connects “salvation” and “worship,” and declares that the coming “hour” when “true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth” has come to pass in the incarnation (4:21-24). This “worship” is seen as the result of “salvation,” or put another way, “eternal life” (4:10, 11, 14). This is made clear in the text when Jesus’ statement about “the Father seeking such people to worship him” is paralleled with Jesus’ claims to be doing “the will of him who sent me” and “gathering fruit for eternal life” (4:34, 36). Thus, Jesus is gathering people to himself, calling the thirsty to trust in him for eternal life. This life is nothing less than union with Christ through faith, which results in worshiping the Father in spirit and in truth. Here, the Father is the object of the believer’s worship through faith in Christ.

Jesus receives the church’s worship. While Jesus gathers worshipers for the Father in chapter 4, in 9:38 Jesus himself receives worship from one who has believed in

him as the Son of Man. As in 4:19-26, the place of worship, worship, and the work of Jesus is prominent. Jesus opened the eyes of the man born blind outside of the Jerusalem temple, and he did so by working “the works of” the one who sent him (8:59; 9:3-4, 7). When the seeing man was questioned by the Pharisees, he boldly identified Jesus as a man sent from God because of the sign, declaring that Jesus was obviously an obedient “worshiper of God” to whom God had listened (9:31-33). The Pharisees respond by casting the man out of the temple (9:34). Hearing that the Pharisees had cast him out of the place of worship, Jesus found him and asked if he “believed in the Son of Man” (9:35). The now seeing man professes faith in the Son of Man and “worshiped him” (9:38). Moses may have his disciples, but the Son of Man has disciples and worshipers (9:27-29), but this worship takes place in Jesus, not in the Jerusalem temple.

It is striking to think that in the shadows of the Jerusalem temple, as a Jewish man has been excommunicated from the covenant community and forbidden to offer worship to God within the temple courts, Jesus calls him to faith and receives his worship. Here Jesus is greater than the temple; he is not only the place and means of worship, but he receives worship, which is properly offered only to God. This episode brings to application all the exalted Christology that John has presented thus far. Jesus is the Holy One of God; as truly man and mediator, he is the sinner’s access to God, and he receives worship because he is truly God. The worship of the Lord Jesus Christ is the logical expectation and culmination of the FG. Indeed, worshiping the incarnate Son is demanded if we believe the Evangelist’s witness to him.

As the church gathers each Lord’s Day, disciples of Jesus come to the Holy One of God. They gather to Christ by faith and meet with God as their Father. This gathering of the disciples of Jesus to the Father occurs only by the blood of the Lamb in which believers have taken refuge through faith. With divine judgment satisfied and sins forgiven, the church worships God in spirit and in truth by faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This recognition of Jesus as the place and means of worship, the temple and Lamb of

God, should characterize the church's corporate worship. While buildings are practically important, the theological significance of the Jerusalem temple has been fulfilled in Christ. This reality enables Jews and Gentiles, Samaritans, and Greeks to meet with God in spirit and in truth through faith in Jesus. All ground is holy ground when believers gather to meet with the Holy One of God; and far from forbidding people to come any closer, the Father is seeking worshipers and Jesus is gathering fruit for eternal life (Exod 3:5; John 4:23, 36). On this holy ground, the church worships the Father through Jesus Christ, and gladly ascribes glory to the only God who is at the Father's side (1:18).

Christological Confessions

The church gathers to ascribe glory and praise to the triune God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and to confess what is true about him, especially as God is revealed in Jesus Christ. John is concerned with Jesus' identity as the Christ, the Son of God (20:30-31). The NT epistles demonstrate that confessing Jesus' identity goes beyond the initial faith by which sinners are justified (cf. Rom 10:10); confessing the person and work of Christ is part of the church's gathered worship. In fact, many scholars believe that passages such as Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15-20; and 1 Timothy 3:16 are early Christological hymns used by the church to teach and affirm Jesus' identity and work, much like the Shema functioned in ancient Israel.³ The briefest and perhaps the earliest of Christological confessions is found in 1 Corinthians 12:3, "Jesus is Lord," which served as a "testimony of a person's affiliation or allegiance" to Jesus as YHWH.⁴

In what follows I will use the term *confession* to mean a congregational declaration of Jesus' identity and work, coupled with affirmation and faith commitment to Jesus Christ, as he is identified in the declaration. Regarding the confessions in the FG,

³ Smith excludes 1 Tim 3:16 from this list but includes Heb 1:1-4. Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, 22.

⁴ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010), 566.

I am referring to declarations and affirmations of Jesus' identity spoken by individuals in the gospel narrative. These confessions may or may not meet with genuine faith in the confessor. The apostle John states that he has recorded certain sign-events "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;" by faith in Jesus who is identified as the Christ, the Son of God, people have life in his name (20:31). John's Gospel is marked by several similar confessions of Jesus' identity which point the reader forward to John's purpose: trusting in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and thus life in his name. With the exception of Thomas' confession in 20:28, the Johannine confessions occur within the first twelve chapters. Jesus is confessed to be the Lamb of God in 1:29, 36, the Messiah in 1:41, the Son of God in 1:49, the Prophet in 6:14, the Holy One of God in 6:69, the Prophet and the Christ in 7:40-41, and in 11:27 Martha confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Significantly, after breathing on the apostles and commanding them to receive the Holy Spirit in 20:22, Jesus appears to Thomas who was not with them during the Lord's earlier appearance. Thomas was unwilling to believe that Jesus had risen, that is, unless he could see his risen body and touch his wounds (20:24-25). Jesus appears again to the twelve, this time Thomas is present. In response to the Lord's invitation to see and touch his body and wounds, and upon his command to believe on this basis, Thomas exclaims, "My Lord and my God!" If any cloud of ambiguity hung over John's audience about Jesus' identity, it was expelled by Thomas' confession.

John 20:28 is the Evangelist's conclusive confession of those who have believed in Jesus and received the Spirit from the glorified Christ: Jesus Christ is "Lord and God," a declaration justified by Jesus' resurrection from the dead. This confession of Jesus' sovereignty and deity is no mere superlative. As Acts 2:36 makes clear, it is the preached message of the early church: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." George Beasley-Murray notes that Thomas' words are not merely a "mode of address" or "exclamation, to

the praise of God.” Rather, this is a sincere confession of who Jesus is revealed to be by his resurrection from the dead.⁵ Found in Thomas’ confession is the height of Christological assertion, and the depth of personal loyalty and allegiance to God incarnate. Thomas is set forth as an example of faith, a faith that honors “the Son, even as they honor the Father” (5:23).⁶ It is to this faith that John calls all of his readers in 20:31, a faith which confesses and entrusts oneself to Jesus as the glorified Lord and God; a faith which unites the believer to Christ to see his glory given him in love by the Father before the foundation of the world (17:24).

In consideration of the FG’s central concern of Jesus’ identity and the proper response of faith, churches would be wise to regularly and congregationally confess the essential Christological truths of Scripture. Just as the declaration of Jesus’ true identity by Peter, Martha, and Thomas was an expression of their trust in Christ, so a corporate confession of faith is both a declaration of who God is in Christ, and an affirmation of the church’s faith in him. Church history has furnished us confessions such as the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed, among others. The Creeds concisely and memorably declare truth about God and what he has done for us in his only begotten Son. Scripture itself contains many confessions of faith. In the OT, passages such as Exodus 34:5-8 and Deuteronomy 6:4-5 teach the church about God’s nature and character. In the NT, passages such as John 1:1-5, 14-18, 1 Corinthians 15:3-5; Philippians 2:5-11, Colossians 1:15-20, and 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16 teach the church that Jesus is truly God and truly man, and that he accomplished salvation for sinners by his death, resurrection, and ascension. Moreover, texts such as 1 Corinthians 15:3-5 summarize the basic elements of the gospel message. Regularly confessing these truths together helps to unite the church around the person and work of Christ. Confessions enable the church to corporately declare who Jesus is

⁵ George Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 385.

⁶ Beasley-Murray, *John*, 386.

and what he has done, while reaffirming its common faith in the one true and living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Such confessions on the lips of the church are a means by which church members teach one another the essential truths of the faith, and guard one another from heresy.

Shepherd Preaching

Pastors who love Jesus will feed his lambs and shepherd his sheep by preaching Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as truly God and truly man. Shepherding the sheep with bread from heaven may result in a God-glorifying death, but these words of life also bind sheep to the Shepherd through life-giving faith (6:68-69; 21:17-19). The Gospel of John concludes with Jesus' restoration and charge to Peter. The restoration calls for an affirmation of love, and the charge defines Peter's ministry and reveals his death for Christ's sake. Though Peter had confessed that he and the others had "come to know" that Jesus was the Holy One of God, on the night Jesus was betrayed he denied three times that Jesus was the Holy One's disciple (6:69; 18:17, 25-27). Thus, in 21:15-18, three times Jesus asked Peter about his love for him, and then charged him three times to pastor (ποιμαίνε) and feed (βόσκει) his sheep. In contrast with his affirmation of confident knowledge (πεπιστεύκαμεν) of Jesus in 6:69, Peter appeals to Jesus' perceptive and sure knowledge (οἶδας) of him and all things, "Lord, you know" (21:15, 16, 17).

The question left unanswered by the text is how, exactly, is Peter to feed and shepherd Christ's people? The only other place in the FG where sheep and shepherd are mentioned together is in 10:1-27. "Sheep" (πρόβατον) is used twice in John to refer to literal sheep (2:14, 15), and once to refer to the Sheep Gate at the temple (5:2). The term is used fifteen times in 10:1-27 and twice in 21:16, 17. Each of these occurrences is a metaphor referring to Christ's people. Chapters 10 and 21 share the themes of shepherd and sheep, yet chapter 10 is in reference to Jesus and chapter 21 is in reference to Peter and Jesus, whose sheep Peter will shepherd. Therefore, chapter 10 may shed light on Peter's shepherding ministry.

In 10:1-27, the Good Shepherd leads his sheep by his voice (vv. 3-4), brings in other sheep to his one flock by his voice (v. 16), and his sheep hear his voice (v. 27), but those who are not of his flock do not believe him (v. 26). Moreover, the Good Shepherd lays his life down for his sheep (vv. 11, 15, 17-18). Uniquely, Jesus is the Good Shepherd; there is only one Shepherd and one flock (v. 16; cf. Ps 78:52; Ezek 34:11-16). Only the Good Shepherd savingly dies for his sheep; he alone, as the Father's Son, has authority to lay his life down and take it up again (vv. 14-15, 18). Despite the uniqueness of the Good Shepherd and his ministry to the sheep, there is a parallel between the shepherding of Jesus and his death, and Peter's shepherding and death (21:18-19). In light of this correspondence, it seems best to view Peter's feeding and shepherding of the sheep as one of preaching Christ, his person and his work. If Jesus calls sheep by his voice and was glorified in death prior to bringing the "other sheep" into the fold, then Peter (and the other apostles) must gather the "other sheep" by bearing witness to Jesus (15:26-27; 17:20). The feeding and the shepherding of chapter 21 must mean that Peter and the twelve authoritatively testify to who Jesus is and what he has done. In this way, the twelve call sinners to faith in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, forgiving sins or withholding forgiveness based on a believing or unbelieving response to Christ (20:23, 30-31). In addition to this evangelistic preaching of Christ, it is by Christ's words abiding in believers that prayers are answered, fruit is produced, and the Father is glorified (15:7-8). The ministry of the apostles in Acts demonstrates that preaching Christ not only birthed the church of the New Covenant but preaching the words of Christ sustained and matured the church (Acts 2:14-41, 42-47; 6:2-4).

With this analysis of shepherding and feeding in the background, a case can be made for the necessity and prominence of preaching Christ in congregational worship, especially if John writes with a secondary purpose of fostering the faith of disciples in Jesus Christ, the Son of God (20:30-31). Pastors who love Jesus will feed his lambs and shepherd his sheep by preaching Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, as truly God and

truly man, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and as the Good Shepherd who laid his life down for the sheep and took it up again in resurrection glory. Jesus said that people must feed on his flesh and drink his blood if they are to have life (6:51-58), and that thirsty sinners must come to him to drink life-giving water (7:37-39). Therefore, the task of preaching is to bear faithful witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ, and thus feed hungry sheep with bread from heaven. Moreover, preaching Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, entails faithfully preaching the Old and New Testament Scriptures with regard to Christ. These alone are given by God, through the Holy Spirit, and thus bear God's authoritative, life-giving, sinner-drawing witness to the Messiah (cf. 2 Tim 3:14-17).

Messianic Hermeneutics

As the church gathers to ascribe glory to God, confess God's truth, and receive nourishment, guidance, and protection from God's Word through its preaching, the interpretation of Scripture is an unseen, yet foundational and indispensable component of congregational worship. All that is said when the church meets—all that is said to God and about God, all that is said to the church in preaching the Scriptures—should flow from a faithful interpretation of Scripture, one that understands the Bible in relationship to the person and work of Jesus Christ. In Jesus' response to the Jews after the Sabbath sign of chapter 5, he speaks of the OT as essentially Messianic. From Christ's assertions about the Scriptures and the writings of Moses in 5:39-40, 45-47, I proposed that the FG employs a Messianic hermeneutic. John's Gospel understands the OT to (1) bear authoritative witness about the Messiah in order that people might come to him by faith and live (5:39-40); (2) testify against those who do not believe in Jesus as the Christ (5:45-46); and (3) that Moses and the Prophets wrote of the Messiah (5:45; cf. 1:45).⁷

⁷ I do not endeavor to address every aspect of the FG's understanding of the OT, nor its methodological approaches to referencing and alluding to the Scriptures. Rather, I am simply analyzing and commending three cohesive approaches to understanding and interpreting the OT in light of Jesus' words in John 5:39-40, 45-47.

A Messianic hermeneutic was not new with Jesus, nor was it an invention of the twelve; Moses himself wrote with a view toward the Messiah, and the Jews of Jesus' day understood this, at least in principle (Deut 18:15-19; John 1:45; 5:39, 46-47; 6:14). As early as the patriarchs, Abraham rejoicingly anticipated, and ultimately saw Jesus' day (8:56). Moreover, after Jesus was glorified, the twelve preached and wrote of Christ with Spirit-given understanding and appropriation of the OT (2:22; 12:16; 13:7; 14:26; 15:26; 16:13; cf. Acts 2:14-41; 13:16-49; Gal 3:1-29). They even cited the OT as a witness against their Jewish hearers when Jesus was rejected as the Messiah (Acts 4:11, 24-28; cf. 7:51-53; 13:40-41; Rom 2:1-4:25). Therefore, what is observed hermeneutically in the FG is well attested to by Jesus, the apostles, and their contemporaries.

The OT authoritatively bears witness to the Messiah. In these last days, God has spoken finally and climactically in his Son, revealing the culmination of his sovereign and saving purposes in Christ, the radiance of divine glory (Heb 1:1-3; John 1:14; 18). The FG records that his glory, "the glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth," was manifested in time and space to the people of Israel (1:9-14). This display of divine glory, coupled with words and works of divine authority and mercy, is persistently met with apprehension and hostility in the FG (cf. 5:17-29). John 5:39-40 functions as a scathing rebuke and inditement of the Jews in their opposition to Jesus as the divine and incarnate Son. In 5:30-38, Jesus cited the various voices who have borne witness to his identity: he bore witness to himself, that he is one with the Father and shares fully in the prerogatives of God, though one person's testimony was insufficient in their eyes (5:19-31); John the Baptist bore witness to the truth, yet they rejoiced in John but for a moment (5:32-35); Jesus claimed that the divine works of the Father that he was doing testified to him, that the Father sent him and asserted that the Father himself bore witness to him (5:36-38). However, all these voices fell upon deaf ears and unbelieving hearts. In 5:39-40, Jesus claimed that the Scriptures bear witness about him, but that these diligent searchers of the sacred text refused to come to Jesus and have life.

By this technical, professional study of the Scripture referenced in 5:39, it was believed that a man would gain life everlasting. As Hillel said, “If he has gained for himself words of the Law he has gained for himself life in the world to come.”⁸ However, Jesus says that those engaged in this diligent study and motivated by a desire for life eternal have misplaced their confidence for the future, and this is to their everlasting shame and ruin. They have missed the Messiah in Moses’ book. Jesus continues, “they,” that is the Scriptures, the entirety of the OT, “bear witness to me” (5:39b). The canonical record of God’s words to Israel, through the Prophets, confront Jesus’ contemporaries and testify (μαρτυροῦσαι) to the Messiah, who is Jesus. However, in the face of divine witness, the students steadfastly stand their ground, refusing to come to Jesus and have eternal life. Implicit in Jesus’ remarks is the purpose of the Scriptures’ witness to him: “That you may have life.” Therefore, the purpose of Scripture study and exegesis is to hear the OT’s witness to Jesus, come to him through faith, and live. The Scriptures presently call those who will hear their testimony to believe in Christ and live; but in this context, Jesus’ words are not a lesson in hermeneutics. They are a sharp condemnation upon blind, hardhearted unbelief. To be technically skilled, excessively diligent, but sinfully motivated, is to necessarily miss Jesus, faith, and eternal life (5:44). If one is not eventually led to Jesus by the study of Scripture, that person does not have the love or life of God within him (5:40-42).

The OT testifies against those who do not believe in Jesus Christ. For the time being, 5:45-47 concludes Jesus’ exchange with the Jews. In his final words of this pericope, Jesus says that Moses, on whom the Jews had set their hope, stands accusing them before the Father. They have found Moses in the Exodus writings and placed their

⁸ Hillel, quoted in C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John* (London: SPCK, 1962), 222-23.

hope for the future on him, likely as an intercessor before God on the last day.⁹ This, says Jesus, will not be the case. Rather than interceding for them, Moses presently stands against them, prosecuting the case and accusing (κατηγορῶν) them of covenant infidelity.

Raymond Brown suggests that Deuteronomy 31:19-20, 26 may stand behind Jesus' statement: "Moses is said to have written a song which would serve as a witness against the Israelites if they violated the covenant; and indeed the whole Mosaic Book of the Law was to serve as a witness (xxxix 26)."¹⁰

The Messianic hermeneutic continued to play a role in the preaching of the early church. Many Jews came to faith in Christ Jesus as the apostles connected their witness to Jesus with the OT's testimony to the Messiah, preaching him as both Lord and Christ.¹¹ However, many Jews continued to reject Jesus as the Messiah, and Moses, once again, accused them before the Father. Stephen's sermon in Acts 7 serves to illustrate the abiding validity of Moses' accusation. As some claimed to align themselves with Moses and castigate Stephen for blaspheming him, he preached,

This Moses, whom they rejected . . . God sent as both ruler and redeemer . . . this man led them out, performing wonders and signs. . . . This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers'. . . . He received living oracles to give us. Our fathers refused to obey him, but thrust him aside. . . . You stiff-necked people . . . you always resist the Holy Spirit . . . you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it. (Acts 7:35-39, 51, 53).

The accusation, which is implicit throughout the sermon, is that just as Israel refused Moses in the wilderness, so they still refuse God's ruler and redeemer of whom Moses wrote (Acts 7:35-37).

By way of implication, a Messianic hermeneutic of the OT reveals unbelief and calls it out into the light. A central role of the Law is to reveal sin and God's judgment

⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, Anchor Bible, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 229.

¹⁰ Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, Anchor Bible, vol. 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 226.

¹¹ See Acts 2:14-41; 13:16-43; 17:1-4, 10-11.

against it, just as Moses accused the religious leaders of Jesus' day. According to Romans 3:19-22, the Law speaks to those under the Mosaic Covenant, nullifying excuses for disobedience and revealing their sin. By the Law it becomes clear that those under the Law cannot justify themselves before God but must give an account to him. "All who sinned under the law will be judged by the law" (Rom 2:12b). Yet the Law, functioning as it does for those under the Law (Jews under the Mosaic Covenant), stops the mouths of Jews and Gentiles alike, and forbids any attempt to controvert the Law's witness against them. The whole world will be held accountable to God by virtue of the Law and Israel's experience under it (Rom 3:19). If the religious leaders of Jesus' day seek to gain eternal life by their diligent study and compliance with the Scriptures, the Law warns that "by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight" (Rom 3:20a). Therefore, a proper understanding of the Law urges its readers and hearers—Jews and Gentiles—to acknowledge their sins, their failure to fully obey God, the just condemnation that rests upon them for their disobedience, and their inability to excuse or justify themselves before God. If one does not heed his accusation, then Moses continues to accuse all who refuse Christ and hope in another (John 5:45-46).

Moses wrote of the Messiah. According to the FG's use of the OT, how should the church understand the Scriptures to bear witness to Christ? I argued in chapter 2 that Moses wrote typologically and prophetically of the Messiah. It is not that the OT names Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ, but that in its parts and in its message as a whole, its paradigms of redemption, prophecies of salvation, warnings of wrath, and displays of holiness, the Scriptures testify to the coming of the Messiah. "Jesus of Nazareth" is the one "whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote" (1:45). Two passages within the confines of this thesis, 5:39 and 5:45-47, establish that Jesus and the FG understood the "Scriptures" and the "writings" of Moses in this way. John 5:39 recognizes in a general sense that the OT bears witness to the Messiah, while 5:45-47 recognizes both a prophetic and typological witness to Christ. An OT typological witness to Christ will

consist of a recognizable correspondence of events, institutions, people, or structural analogies that prophetically point forward to Christ and his salvation.¹² In general, an OT prophetic witness to the Messiah was given to a prophet by YHWH; it is more specific and less ambiguous in nature and content than typology. Deuteronomy 18:15 fits this definition and is confirmed to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ by the narrative of the FG, and by the sermons in Acts 3:11-26; 7:1-53. “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your brothers—it is to him you shall listen” (Deut 18:15; cf. Acts 3:19-26; 7:37, 52-53).

With his words in 5:39, 45-47, Jesus acknowledges the divine authority, clarity, and sufficiency of the Exodus writings as they speak about him. The witness to the Messiah is so clear that he expects the Jews to perceive it; it sufficiently testifies to Christ that the Jews may come to him by its light. Moreover, Jesus certified the Scriptures’ divine authority when he placed Moses’ canonical witness on par with his own words as the divine Son. In line with these recognitions, the church should search the Scriptures, recognizing that they bear witness to Christ, and by their witness Christians again and again can come to Christ with renewed hope and confidence in him as the way, the truth, and the life (5:45; 14:6). “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, and it is they that bear witness to me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life” (5:39-40).

The implication is clear: Moses’ witness to the Messiah calls for faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Books of Moses demand the church’s study and faith; neglect or dismissal of the Law and the rest of the OT as a witness to Christ prohibits one from understanding more fully the glory and work of God the Son. In an age of pragmatism, biblical ignorance, and demand for quick relevancy, a working knowledge of the OT fortifies the theological foundations of the church; it enhances the believer’s understanding

¹² Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2006), 246-47.

Christ's person and work, while strengthening faith in him. John's Gospel presents the entire OT Scriptures as bearing witness about the Messiah who alone gives eternal life: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me" (5:39).

Conclusion

This thesis argues that by hailing Jesus as the Holy One of God, the FG identifies him as YHWH of Moses' Exodus writings and as the One consecrated to give eternal life. Peter's confession in 6:69 functions as a climactic, comprehensive assertion about the one of whom Moses wrote. The title "Holy One of God" speaks to Jesus' unique identity as YHWH, and as the One uniquely consecrated by the Father for God's salvific, life-giving purposes. I have argued that chapters 5–7 present Jesus as speaking YHWH's life-giving words and performing his redemptive works in Exodus-like fashion. As one reads the FG, keeping Jesus' words about Moses' writings in mind, a discernable pattern of Exodus events becomes clear in the ministry of Jesus.

By narrating the works and words of Jesus in light of the great OT act of redemption, especially in the Feast Cycle of chapters 5–10, John reveals that Jesus is the one of whom Moses wrote typologically and prophetically. Specifically, Moses prophesied that YHWH would raise up a prophet like him from among the Israelites. The Lord promised to put his words in the mouth of this prophet, and he would speak only what was commanded of him (Deut 18:18). John presents Jesus as the prophet like Moses who not only worked Exodus-like signs, but who spoke only what his Father taught him (8:28). Moreover, the FG understands Moses to have written of the Messiah typologically; the Exodus writings as a whole become an interpretive stage upon which the Christ, the Son of God, is revealed to Israel. The theology and history of the Exodus is the pulpit from which Jesus Christ speaks God's words and does God's works, even as he comes to his own in first century Palestine. As I argued, John adopts the basic Exodus pattern of redemptive events found in Exodus 12-17 as a paradigm for Jesus' Exodus-like

redemption narrated in chapters 5–7. When compared, these passages exhibit a tight thematic and chronological correspondence with each other.¹³ In this way, Jesus is to be recognized as the fulfilment of the theology and history of the Pentateuch; and Moses’ writings, Jesus claims, are a prophetic witness to the Messiah that must be heard. “Moses . . . wrote of Me” (5:46). Specifically, and paradigmatically, Moses wrote of the Messiah, the Holy One of God.

¹³ See table 1 in chap. 2.

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ABSTRACT

THE HOLY ONE OF GOD: JOHN'S MESSIAH WHO IS YHWH OF MOSES' EXODUS WRITINGS

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This thesis argues that, by hailing Jesus as the Holy One of God in 6:69, the Fourth Gospel identifies Jesus as YHWH of Moses' Exodus writings, and the one consecrated to give eternal life. The title "Holy One of God" asserts Jesus' deity and humanity; he is the Christ and the Son of God (20:31). This thesis demonstrates that the Fourth Gospel retells salvific events of the Exodus, especially Exodus 12:1-17:7, in John 5:1-7:52 in light of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Jesus identifies himself with YHWH of the Exodus by his call to the thirsty in 7:37-39.

The first chapter introduces the subject of research, surveys the relevant literature, describes the void in literature, and asserts the thesis. Chapter 2 lays the foundation of the argument by demonstrating that John understands Moses to have written of the Messiah typologically and prophetically. However, the Evangelist presents Jesus as the Messiah superior to Moses by way of his divine identity and salvific commission. Chapter 3 argues that Jesus is the divine provider and savior of the new Exodus who is also the sacrificial and Passover meal from heaven.

Chapter 4 is the heart of the thesis. It focuses on the title "Holy One of God" from John 6:69 and explores the import of Jesus' cry to the thirsty in 7:37-39. Chapter 5 concludes the thesis by drawing out the ecclesiological implications of this work and summarizing the supporting arguments.

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