

15 · John and the Johannine Epistles

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INTRODUCTION

UNTIL fairly recently, John's use of the OT received relatively little attention. What little there was tended to serve other interests. For example, six decades ago Faure (1922) argued that the quotation formulae in this gospel provide evidence from which we may deduce the existence and extent of written sources used by the evangelist in the composition of his work – a suggestion vigorously contested by Smend (1925).¹ The classic exchange between Dodd (1952), who argued that the NT writers understood the kerygma in terms of the OT, and largely respected the contexts of the various passages on which they tended to concentrate, and Sundberg (1959), who argued against these points, obviously had its importance for the study of the fourth gospel (FG). Apart from some notable exceptions, however, the study of John was largely shaped by other agendas. Debates focused on various source theories and on the intellectual matrix from which the FG sprang, the dominant hypotheses being represented by Bultmann (ET 1971), who insisted on the priority of Mandaean Gnosticism, and by Dodd (1953), who defended the influence of the Hermetica on the FG. The 'notable exceptions' included the commentary by Hoskyns and Davey (1940), the most important feature of which was the many lines drawn between the FG and the OT, the second volume of Braun (1964), and a seminal essay by Barrett (1947).

More than any other factor, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls served not only to awaken interest in the ties between John and Judaism, but also to stimulate detailed study of the broader question of Jewish hermeneutics in the first century – a growing field of inquiry that has generated many fresh studies on John. In this short chapter it is clearly impossible to comment on all of these; but I shall draw attention to some of the major contributions, and argue that the cumulative evidence suggests more complex connexions between John and the OT than is sometimes appreciated. The complexity of these connexions compels us to consider not only direct quotations of the OT, but the themes drawn from it and the way in which they are taken up.

DIRECT QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

Useful summaries of the bare data abound, organised in various ways (e.g. Amsler, 1960, pp. 34–44; Hanson, 1983, pp. 113–32). Because of the paraphrastic nature of some of John's quotations,² it is not always clear which instances we should class as 'direct quotations' and which are mere allusions. But arguably there are thirteen such quotations introduced by a formula (1:23 [Isa. 40:3]; 2:17 [Ps. 69:9]; 6:31 [Ps. 78:24]; 6:45 [Isa. 54:13]; 10:34 [Ps. 82:6]; 12:14f [Ps. 62:11 and Zech. 9:9; cf. Isa. 35:4; 40:9]; 12:38 [Isa. 53:1]; 12:39f [Isa. 6:10]; 13:18 [Isa. 41:10]; 15:25 [Ps. 35:19 or Ps. 69:5]; 19:24 [Ps. 22:18]; 19:36 [Exod. 12:46 or Ps. 34:21 or Num. 9:12]; 19:37 [Zech. 12:10]). Two more direct quotations from the OT appear without introductory formulae (1:51 [Gen. 28:12 – though some see this as an allusion, not a quotation]; 12:13 [Ps. 118:25f]). To these fifteen, four passages must be added where an introductory formula clearly refers the reader to the OT, but no OT text is cited (7:38; 7:42 (some find sufficient connexion with 2 Sam. 7:12 and Mic. 5:2 to warrant inclusion of this entry in the first list); 17:12;³ 19:38 (cf. Ps. 22:15)). Finally, mention must be made of the six passages where 'the Scripture' or some OT person or persons are said to speak or write of Jesus or of some aspect of his teaching or mission (1:45; 2:22; 3:10; 5:39, 45f; 20:9).⁴

Restricting ourselves now to the direct quotations, whether introduced by a formula or not, five are attributed to Jesus (1:51; 6:45; 10:34; 13:18; 15:25); six others are editorial (12:14f, 38, 39f; 19:24, 36, 37), or perhaps seven if we include 2:17, where the remembering of Scripture is performed by the disciples, but in John's presentation that includes the Beloved Disciple. One quotation is found on the lips of John the Baptist (1:23); the other two are ascribed to crowds (6:31; 12:13).

It is difficult to discern any principle of discrimination that associates certain kinds of OT texts with certain speakers. What stands out is not which party in the FG appeals to the OT, but what is accomplished in each instance. The OT citations in one way or another point to Jesus, identifying him, justifying the responses he elicits, grounding the details of his life and death in the Scriptures. When the Baptist identifies himself as the one crying in the wilderness, 'Make the way for the Lord straight!' (1:23), the purpose of the quotation is as much to remove John from competition with the messiah as it is to identify his proper role. Jesus' cleaning of the temple and his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey are messianic actions understood to be anticipated in the OT (2:17; 12:14f). If the crowds cite Scripture to associate Moses and manna, reflecting perhaps the tradition that the messiah would provide a similarly lavish supply (6:31),⁵ it is so that Jesus can be presented as the one who not only fulfils such expectations but outstrips them. The FG's

christology and eschatology can both be grounded in the OT (1:51). If some people are judicially hardened so that they cannot respond to Jesus, if others hate him and Judas Iscariot betrays him, it is all foreseen and predicted by Scripture (12:38–40; 13:18; 15:25). Conversely, those who respond positively to Jesus do so in fulfilment of Scripture that predicts a time when 'all your sons will be taught by Yahweh' (Isa. 54:13; John 6:45). If Jesus can appeal to Scripture in what appears to be an *ad hominem* fashion, it is only to prove that he has every right to be called the Son of God (10:34). The crowds of enthusiastic supporters waving palms praise God in scriptural terms because those terms recognise Jesus as the one who comes in the name of the Lord (12:13). The details of Jesus' death are particularly tied to OT passages (19:24, 36, 37).

Moreover, it must be recognised that the evangelist does not think of these citations as an exhaustive list of the connexions he could make between the life and death of Jesus the messiah and the Scriptures revered both by himself, as a Christian, and by the non-Christian Jews he wished to confront. They are a mere sample. After all, he insists, the Scriptures testify to Jesus (5:39, 45f); and after the resurrection, nothing is more important than that the disciples come to understand these Scriptures appropriately (20:9). Jesus' life, ministry, and death/resurrection/exaltation were mapped out by God's will. Insofar as that will is made known in Scripture, so far also must there be correlation between that Scripture and Jesus. Small wonder, then, to put the matter another way, that Jesus says and does *only* what the Father gives him to say and do, and *everything* the Father gives him to say and do, thereby pleasing him completely (5:19, 30; 8:29).⁶

When we turn from the rather unified purpose of the citations within the gospel as a whole to the formulae that introduce them, we find enormous diversity:

- 1:23 ἔφη
 2:17 ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐστίν
 6:31 καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον
 6:45 ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς προφήταις
 10:34 οὐκ ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τῷ νόμῳ ὑμῶν ὅτε...;
 12:14f καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον
 12:38 ἵνα ὁ λόγος Ἡσαΐου τοῦ προφήτου πληρωθῆ ὃν εἶπεν
 12:39f ὅτι πάλιν εἶπεν Ἡσαΐας
 13:18 ἀλλ' ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ
 15:25 ἀλλ' ἵνα πληρωθῆ ὁ λόγος ὁ ἐν τῷ νόμῳ αὐτῶν γεγραμμένος ὅτι
 19:24 ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ [ἡ λέγουσα]
 19:36 ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῆ
 19:37 καὶ πάλιν ἑτέρα γραφή λέγει

We may add to this list the four passages where formulae are used in connexion with an OT allusion, even where there is no specific quotation:

- 7:38 καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή
 7:42 οὐχ ἡ γραφή εἶπεν...;
 17:12 ἵνα ἡ γραφή πληρωθῇ
 19:28 ἵνα τελειωθῇ ἡ γραφή

The sheer diversity is striking. Other NT writers often prefer a simple γέγραπται, but John never uses that expression. Freed (1965, p. 126) finds in the list nothing more than a reflection of John's stylistic penchant for slight variations. But the clustering of some form or other of ἵνα πληρωθῇ (or in one instance τελειωθῇ) in the second half of the book has not gone unnoticed. Hanson (1983, pp. 113ff) suggests that OT texts cited with the explicit 'fulfilment' formulae were commonly held by Christians to point to Christ, whereas those without the 'fulfilment' group were discovered by John, and had not yet achieved community endorsement. To Hanson's credit, this theory is entered as conjecture; it appears very difficult to prove, and suffers from some awkwardness over what is admitted as an introductory 'formula'.⁷ By contrast, Evans (1982) offers a theological explanation for the clustering of the 'fulfilment' formulae. Even the two instances after 12:38 where a fulfilment formula is *not* used are linked to a preceding fulfilment formula through the use of 'again' (πάλιν); so the clustering is well-nigh absolute. It appears as if the evangelist particularly wishes to stress the fulfilment of Scripture in connexion with the passion of Jesus and the obduracy motif with which he links it. This does not mean that earlier passages without πληροῦν must not be understood as links between events in Jesus' life and the Scriptures, as fulfilment to prophecy (see especially 1:51; 2:17; 6:45; 12:14f); it does mean that the fulfilment motif is more forcefully stressed the closer one gets to the rejection of Jesus culminating on the cross. And this in turn suggests an audience that needs to be provided with a rationale, a biblical rationale, for the substantial rejection of Jesus by his fellow Jews.

The direct quotations in the FG come from all three divisions of the Hebrew canon; but another pair of clusters can be observed. Moses is mentioned by name about a dozen times – all in the first nine chapters, and sometimes as an equivalent to 'the law' or 'the Scripture'. In these chapters, the question of Jesus's *authority vis-à-vis* 'Moses' is particularly prominent. Of other OT personalities, only Isaiah receives multiple mention: he appears three times (1:23; 12:38, 39). The first of these passages does not now concern us; the other two occur in the chapter that Smith (1976) identifies as the crucial transition between what have sometimes been called 'the book of signs' (John 1–11 or John 1–12) and 'the book of glory' (John 13–21), where the glorification of Jesus is virtually synonymous with his passion, resurrection

and exaltation. Here Isaiah is introduced, not only to ground the obduracy motif in Scripture (John 12:38–41), but for a deeper reason. In a still unpublished paper, Evans (n.d.) has listed the numerous links between John 12:1–43 and Isa. 52:7–53:12, suggesting that the former is a midrash on the latter. He notes, for instance, that between Isa. 53:1 and Isa. 6:10, which are cited back to back in John 12:38–40, there is not only the thematic link of obduracy (which justifies bringing them together by the principle of שורה גורה, 'equivalence of expression'), but shared themes of exaltation and glory (compare Isa. 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9 with Isa. 52:12, 13, 15), themes of obvious importance to the FG (Dodd, 1953, p. 247, made somewhat similar observations). Evans then lists a dozen features in John 12 that seem to reflect tight linguistic or thematic links with Isa. 52:7–53:12; and he concludes, against some recent treatments, that John may well be trying to identify Jesus with the suffering servant of the Lord.

When we ask more narrowly what kind of hermeneutical axioms and appropriation techniques (to use the categories of Moo, 1983, pp. 5–78) John adopts when he cites the OT, the answers prove complex and the literature on each quotation legion. At the risk of oversimplification, the dominant approach is that of various forms of typology (cf. the brief summary in Goppelt, ET 1982, pp. 179–95), which is itself based on a perception of patterns of continuity across the sweep of salvation history. The Davidic typology that surfaces repeatedly in the NT may well stand behind some of the Psalm quotations in the FG (2:17; 15:25; 19:24, 28). Ps. 69 offers the lament of the righteous sufferer: how much more appropriately does it fit the messiah who is on the way to the cross. If the psalmist's suffering is related to zeal for the temple (Ps. 69:9), then opposition to Jesus is likewise opposition to one whose zeal for the temple is remarkable (John 2:17; the close connexion between zeal and death is conveyed by καταφάγεται, as Moo, 1983, pp. 233f n. 4, points out). Indeed, granted the undergirding Davidic typology, the connexion is not merely analogical: the righteous sufferer of Ps. 69 prefigures, and thus predicts, the one in whom righteous suffering would reach its apogee.

Something similar may be argued with respect to the use of Ps. 22:18 in John 19:24. The psalmist, afflicted both by physical distress and by the mockery of his opponents, apparently uses the symbolism of an execution scene, in which the executioners have the right to distribute the victim's clothes amongst themselves. It is unlikely that John creates his 'fulfilment' out of whole cloth. The seamless garment episode is found in all three synoptic gospels, so is a staple of early christian tradition. The alleged symbolic value of such a creation is debatable: the seamless garment probably does not suggest Jesus is the new high priest, since this theme is but weakly attested in the FG, and χιτῶν is not in any case the normal word for the high priest's robe. Still less likely is the suggestion that the seamless robe is a symbol for

the seamless unity of the church (cf. Schnackenburg, 1970, III, p. 274). Moreover, if this is a creation by the evangelist, it is hard to see why he should have used χιτῶν and λάχομεν, instead of the psalm's ἱματισμός and ἔβαλον κληῖρον (cf. Brown, 1966–71, II, p. 920). It is sometimes argued that John misunderstands the Hebrew parallelism, and consequently relates the distribution of some of Jesus' garments to the first stich of Ps. 22:18, and the gambling for the seamless garment to the second. But as Lindars (1961, p. 91) points out, 'John must not be held ignorant of the most constant characteristic of Hebrew poetry.' Moo (1983, pp. 256–7) suggests that 'John is aware of the application of Ps. 22:18 in the crucifixion narrative' and 'has access to a tradition which mentions a seamless tunic that was gambled for. Not unnaturally, he sees in this incident a fulfilment of the other half of the psalm verse and accordingly records it.' Consequently, this is 'a case in which the text has been re-oriented by the situation.' By contrast, Hoskyns and Davey (1940, II, p. 629) point out that the psalm verse itself allows the possibility of being divided into two parts, since the LXX switches from the plural to the singular, which conceivably could be taken to indicate outer and inner clothes respectively. In any case it is not entirely clear that the appeal to Ps. 22:18 is tied to *both* the distribution of the garments *and* to the gambling: it *may* be tied only to the latter. If he had been trying to make the connexion with both incidents, John could have made the dual link more explicit by using διεμερίσαντο in 19:23, rather than ἐποίησαν τέσσαρα μέρη. However the details be resolved, there can be little doubt that John understands the event to fulfil prophecy; for although ἵνα plus the subjunctive can have ecbatic force in the FG, it is difficult to imagine anything other than the more customary telic force when the verb in the subjunctive is πληρώω. Once again, however, the undergirding hermeneutical axiom is probably Davidic typology.

This does not mean that every OT quotation is utilised in some typological fashion. On balance, it seems best to see in John 12:37–41 a fairly direct appropriation of the OT texts cited (Isa. 53:1; 6:10), coupled with the cardinal assumption of Christians that Jesus is the messiah. Detailed discussion in this brief essay is not possible; but the main lines of a plausible interpretation are as follows. If the links developed by Dodd and Evans (discussed *supra*) are valid, then the pair of Isaiah quotations are linked not only by the obduracy theme but also by the exaltation/glory theme; and Jesus is understood to be the suffering servant prophesied by Isaiah.⁸ In that case, the appropriation of the OT text, so far as the evangelist is concerned, is quite direct. The second quotation, from Isa. 6:10 (John 12:40), ends with the editorial explanation, 'Isaiah said this because he saw his [i.e. Jesus'] glory and spoke about him' (12:41). In the context of Isaiah 6 (LXX), the vision Isaiah saw was focused on Yahweh of hosts, the King. Given his understanding of the pre-incarnate nature of the Logos, John makes the obvious connexion and

concludes that what Isaiah really saw was Jesus Christ in his pre-incarnate glory (cf. Barrett, 1978, p. 432; Hanson, 1965, pp. 104–8).⁹ In this case the appropriation of the OT text depends not only on the 'obduracy' link with the previous citation from Isaiah, but on the governing christology. If God has revealed himself to us, it is by means of Logos, his self-expression: that is what Isaiah saw. But then both OT quotations refer to Jesus Christ – one in terms of the suffering servant, and one in terms of the glory of God reported in Isaiah 6. The two themes come together, for John, in the term 'glory': Jesus' glory is supremely displayed in the cross, the path to his return to the glory he had with the Father before the world began (17:5). This, then, is why John connects the two texts from Isaiah, and concludes that Isaiah said these things (ταῦτα, probably referring to *both* quotations) because he saw Jesus' *glory*.

In short, the reasons behind the appropriation of this or that text, and in particular the reasons why the evangelist can conclude that some of these texts are *fulfilled* in the ministry and death of Jesus, can usually be discerned, provided we focus attention not only on the appropriation techniques utilised in each instance, but also on the hermeneutical and theological axioms that guide his thought.

APPARENT QUOTATIONS FROM AND ALLUSIONS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is impossible to draw a strict line between this section and the ones that precede and succeed it; its purpose, however, is to draw attention to passages where there is neither direct quotation from the OT, nor the treatment of some major OT theme, but something in between.

As we have seen, there are four places where the evangelist, using a quotation formula, alludes to the OT without actually quoting it (7:38, 42; 17:12; 19:28), and one instance in 12:34 where the crowds testify to their understanding of what the 'law' taught concerning the messiah. These have been discussed at length in commentaries and journal articles; each instance is fraught with complex questions. For instance, in 19:28, there are three principal foci for debate: (a) Should the ἵνα clause be read with what precedes ('Jesus, knowing that all things had been accomplished in order to fulfil Scripture, said "I thirst"') or with what succeeds ('Jesus, knowing that all things had been accomplished, in order to fulfil Scripture said "I thirst"')? The former permits us to see a general reference to the OT; the latter requires us to look for a text that speaks specifically of thirst. Almost certainly the latter is correct (cf. Moo, 1983, pp. 275–278). (b) What OT text is in view? In part the answer to this question is related to the first question; for only if we agree that the fulfilment clause is tied to the exclamation 'I thirst' must we specify some particular text. But agreement has not been reached on which text that

might be. Some have promoted Ps. 22:15: since the psalmist's tongue is cleaving to his jaws, presumably he is thirsty. Others advocate Ps. 42:2 or 63:2 ('My soul thirsts for God'); but that means John 19:28 must be taken in a highly symbolic way not clearly warranted by the context, since Jesus' thirst is for water, not for God. The best suggestion seems to be Ps. 69:21. Not only has this psalm been used twice before in the FG (2:17; 15:25), but this particular verse, Ps. 69:21, is apparently alluded to in John 19:29-30 (ὄξος). Moreover, Psalm 69 is a staple in the synoptic accounts of the crucifixion, and includes specific reference to 'thirst'. (I am not here presupposing a specific literary relationship between John and the synoptics, but merely pointing out that the latter demonstrate that frequent appeal to this psalm was a common feature of the earliest passion traditions.) (c) Why then the verbal form $\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota\omega\theta\eta$ in the fulfilment clause, instead of the expected $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\omega\theta\eta$? Both verbs preserve the emphasis on fulfilment, the bringing to pass of God's design announced earlier; but it is likely that the choice of the verb was a self-conscious attempt to draw attention to the cognate $\eta\delta\eta$ πάντα τετέλεσται (19:28), and the climactic τετέλεσται two verses later (19:30). John 19:28 represents the final instance of Jesus's *active, self-conscious* fulfilment of Scripture in the FG; and thus, tied to τετέλεσται, the cry 'I thirst' represents 'not the isolated fulfilling of a particular trait in the scriptural picture, but the perfect completion of the whole prophetic image' (Westcott, 1908, II, p. 315; cf. Lindars, 1961, p. 100; Reim, 1974, p. 49). These details converge to provide a further instance of an essentially typological appropriation of the OT by the evangelist.

There are other kinds of allusion to the OT Scriptures. Hanson (1980, pp. 166-71; 1983, pp. 126-9) shows that John sometimes permits the words of Scripture to influence the shaping of his narrative, and adduces several examples of greater or lesser plausibility, in which words or concepts seem to be transferred from the OT to the FG: 1:30f, 43-51 (Gen. 28); 10:24 (Ps. 118:10); 11:41 (Ps. 118:21); 11:11-14 (Job 14:12-15); 12:1-8, 20, 28f (Hag. 2:6-9); 12:19, 32 (Job 21:32f).

More striking yet is the list of passages in which it is either presupposed or argued that the OT Scriptures speak of Christ, and therefore *ought* to be interpreted christologically (1:45; 2:22; 3:10; 5:39, 45f; 20:9). Parallels are found elsewhere in the NT (e.g. Luke 24:44f); but they are frequent in John, and not only orientate the reader to the hermeneutical axioms that govern the evangelist's reading of the OT, but sometimes carry a stinging suggestion that Jesus' followers or would-be followers should have understood how to read the OT from his stance earlier than they did.

The point is made not only to opponents (5:39, 45f), but also to Nicodemus. He is 'the teacher of Israel' (3:10 - presumably a title) and yet, incredibly, does not know 'these things'. This orientation to the OT provides

the clue to the right interpretation of what it means to be born of water and spirit (3:3, 5). To find in 'water' a reference to baptism is not only needlessly anachronistic, it is to forfeit the grounding of the reference in the OT, which 3:10 leads us to expect. Nor will it do to see in 'water' a reference to natural birth: so far as we know, 'being born of water' is not an expression John's contemporaries used in this regard. And contrary to suggestions tentatively advanced by Odeberg (1929, pp. 48ff) and Morris (1971, pp. 216), evidence that water here stands as a symbol for semen is tangential and late. Still less satisfactory is Bultmann's famous excision of ὕδατος καί (1971, pp. 138f, n. 3). The most satisfactory approach is that of Belleville (1980), who looks for collocations of 'water' and 'spirit' in the OT, examining the symbolic component of the semantic range of 'water' both in the OT and in the FG. Passages such as Ezek. 36:25-7 may be suggested as providing the background: in John 3, then, 'water' refers to the eschatological cleansing accomplished through God's Spirit, and 'spirit' to the imparting of God's nature (i.e. what is born of the Spirit is spirit). Water and spirit together define the nature of the second birth that characterises the promised new covenant; and this, Jesus tells Nicodemus in 3:10, his interlocutor should have known.

OLD TESTAMENT THEMES AND THE REPLACEMENT MOTIF

If explicit quotations and rather subtle allusions constituted the only kind of use of the OT made by the FG, the connexions would be impressive, but scarcely overwhelming. In fact, the FG is replete with OT themes and motifs, most of which have called forth voluminous discussion. One thinks of such themes as the vine and the branches, sheep and the shepherd, the serpent in the wilderness, the lamb of God, the Jewish feasts, the Sabbath, Abraham and his sons, repeated references to the law and to the Spirit, mention of the temple, christological titles grounded in the OT (however shaped by intervening tradition), and more. The precise line of connexion with the OT is sometimes difficult to determine, not because of a want of OT evidence, but because of an overabundance: does 'lamb of God' primarily relate to the paschal lamb, the horned ram of Jewish apocalyptic, the lamb led to the slaughter in Isaiah 53, or to the *Akedah* (Genesis 22)? A clear consensus has not yet been reached (in addition to the commentaries, cf. Vermes, 1961, pp. 224-5; Evans, n.d.; Dodd, 1953, pp. 233ff; Bruce, 1978, pp. 147-9; Reim, 1974, pp. 178f; Moo, 1983, pp. 312-14). The line of connexion is also made difficult to discern on occasion because the evangelist is not only drawing a line from the OT but simultaneously attempting to rule out one or more of the contemporary Jewish exegeses. To mention but one instance, it is fairly clear that in John 3:13-14 the evangelist is providing, among other things, a polemic against the ascents of Moses and all others who are said to have

ascended into heaven (cf. Odeberg, 1929, pp. 72–89; Meeks, 1967, p. 141; Borgen, 1977).

There are many other themes. Reim and Lindars especially stress the influence of wisdom motifs on John's christology. The themes of law and spirit have received substantial treatment (e.g. Pancaro, 1975, and Johnston, 1970, respectively); other themes, such as Abraham and his sons, have still been inadequately probed (though cf. Grässer, 1985, pp. 154ff). Moreover, Barrett (1947) has demonstrated that certain testimonia in the synoptic gospels reappear in the FG not as testimonia but as integral parts of the drama – although it should be said that, conversely, John can also provide explicit quotations of the OT where there are only hints in Mark (cf. Smith, 1972, pp. 162f).

The growing number of passages being labelled 'midrash' in the FG attests profound dependence on the OT – profound not only in terms of the knowledge of the evangelist, but also of his self-conscious dependence upon the authority of those Scriptures to justify his theological presentation, since midrash, unlike the Mishnah which is apodictic, projects the idea that justification of teaching is necessary (cf. Halivni, 1986). Following the influential work of Borgen (1965) on the treatment of manna in John 6:31–58, we find, among others, the suggestion that John's Logos doctrine is informed by Isa. 55:10–11, where God's word is sent into the world and then returns to heaven (Lausberg, 1979; Dahms, 1981); the argument that John 1:14–18 is a midrash on Exodus 34 (Hanson, 1980, pp. 97–109); a case for the view that John's affirmation of Jesus' deity is based on a midrash of Psalm 45, possibly in the text form of an emerging targum (Reim, 1984); and, as we have already noted, the suggestion that John 12 is a midrash on Isa. 52:7–53:12 (Evans, n.d.).

Part of the problem inherent in these discussions is the ambiguity regarding what 'midrash' really is. To say that it is interpretative commentary of an antecedent sacred text is inadequate, if it includes material as diverse as John 1:14–18, John 6:31ff, and the theme of the deity of Jesus in the FG. Moreover, interpretative comment cast in the form of, say, a story raises the question as to whether the story has historical referents. Is the comment 'midrashic' regardless of the answer to that question? If not, by what criteria can one decide if a narrative is 'midrashic' (i.e. without its own historical referent) comment on another text, or alternatively an historical account (or a mixture of the historical and the non-historical!) determinatively shaped by the categories of an antecedent sacred text? There is little consensus on these points, and insufficient work done on them to admit much of an answer.

What is perhaps most noteworthy is not how many of the themes and institutions converge on Jesus, but how they are so presented as to make Jesus 'fulfil' them and actually *replace* them. The only Jewish feast the synoptists

mention is the Passover; but John mentions it ten times, and also refers to Tabernacles (7:2), Dedication (10:22), and once simply 'a feast of the Jews' (5:1). But these are presented in contexts where Jesus' activity or utterance shows where the true significance of that feast now lies. Thus in John 7, at the festival of Tabernacles, he proclaims himself to be the one who gives living water (related to the water-pouring ceremony); and in John 8, still at the same feast, he calls himself the light of the world, outstripping the symbolic lighting of the candelabra. 'Interwoven into his festal pattern is the presentation of Jesus as the true Temple, the antitype of the brazen serpent, the true manna, the true water-giving rock, the true fiery pillar, the eschatological Moses, the new Torah, and the true Paschal Sacrifice' (Longenecker, 1975, pp. 153–4).

The replacement motif can coalesce with other approaches to the OT. Thus when Jesus proclaims himself the good shepherd (John 10), the reader cannot forget that in the OT Yahweh (Ezek. 34:11) or the messiah (Ezek. 34:23) is the shepherd who cares for his flock: Jesus identifies his ministry with theirs, and the appropriation of Ezekiel 34 is fairly direct. But the entailment, for the church, is that it is the new messianic community that 'fulfils' Israel's role in the Ezekiel passage; and that connexion is unavoidably typological, and bound up with replacement of the type. The same sort of connexion is made in John 15. The vine imagery cannot fail to recall Isa. 5:1ff; Jer. 2:21; Ps. 80:8–16; but now the true vine is not Israel, but Jesus himself, and the branches that are 'in' him. Unlike the vine that did not bear satisfactory fruit (Isaiah 5), Jesus, the true vine, produces lasting fruit to God's glory (15:8) through the 'branches' that remain in him (15:5, 16).

Doubtless the most studied replacement motif is that of Moses (cf. Glasson, 1963; Meeks, 1967; Haacker, 1972; Saito, 1977, pp. 109–21); and this is related to Jesus as the teacher of *law* (Pancaro, 1975; cf. Böcher, 1965, pp. 162f). But there are many others. Davies (1974, pp. 288ff) has creatively drawn attention to the way Jesus in the FG replaces various forms of *holy space*. This includes not only obvious references such as the temple (Jesus speaks of the temple of his body, 2:21) and the pool of Siloam (which, John 9:7 carefully points out, means 'Sent' – but Jesus is the Sent One *par excellence*), but also numerous others, some of them subtly presented. If the angels of 1:51 ascend and descend on the Son of Man, this does not make the Son of Man equivalent in role to Jacob's ladder, but to Bethel, the house of God. Jewish and Samaritan holy places alike are transcended in the one who bequeaths his Spirit and insists that those who worship the Father do so in spirit and truth (4:21ff).

Thus again and again the typologies the evangelist develops do not *simply* interpret the OT, or *simply* utilise the categories of the OT to explain Jesus and his gospel, but become as well the vehicles by which Jesus and his gospel effectively *replace* those institutions, events and themes that have anticipated

him (cf. Goppelt, ET 1982, pp. 185ff). If they anticipate him, they point to him, prophesy of him; and he fulfils them and thus replaces them. This does not mean, for the evangelist, that they are discarded so much as fulfilled: they find their true significance and real continuity in him who is the true vine, the true light, the true temple, the one of whom Moses wrote.

In this light, the difficult expression in 1:16, *χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος*, should probably be understood as 'grace instead of grace' or 'grace in exchange for grace': that is, the grace of God in the person and work of Jesus replaces the grace of God that was manifest in the earlier revelation. Barrett (1978, p. 168) objects that 'the point of the passage is that grace did not come by Moses; nor is the grace of God available in two grades'. But neither objection is weighty. John forcefully insists that salvation is from the Jews (4:22). He does not treat the OT with scorn or rejection; he views it with reverence, treating it as the 'given' of revelation that anticipates the new revelation occurring in Jesus. God's grace may not come in two grades; but it may come in degrees, the gracious revelation that anticipates what is yet to come, and the gracious revelation that fulfils the anticipation, the very epitome of grace and truth. Thus 1:17 *explains* 1:16 (ὅτι): from the fulness of the Logos's grace we have received one grace in substitution for, in exchange for (the most natural meaning of the preposition), another grace; *for* the law was through Moses, grace and truth through Jesus Christ.¹⁰

THE JOHANNINE EPISTLES

The most striking feature relevant to our subject in these epistles is the absence not only of OT quotations but even of many unambiguous allusions to the OT. The only OT person named is Cain (1 John 3:12). Partly because of this mention of Cain, some have seen in *δικαίος* (1 John 2:1) a reference to Abel; but the connexion is speculative, since this adjective is commonly applied to the messiah in Jewish literature. The suggestion of Smith (1972, p. 58) to the effect that these epistles, and perhaps the farewell discourse as well, represent the progressive attenuation of the Johannine church's entanglement in a Jewish matrix, is not very convincing. After all (as Smith himself points out), other NT writings normally considered late (e.g. Hebrews, Revelation), not to mention a non-canonical work like 1 Clement, are steeped in OT quotations and allusions; so if the alleged attenuation has taken place, it is certainly not a function of mere passage of time from the resurrection. More important, the most likely reason for the dramatic reduction of OT quotations and allusions lies elsewhere. If we adopt the majority view that holds that the epistles were written after the FG, and join with those who argue that the epistles are sparked off by growing disputes, grounded in incipient Gnosticism,

concerning the correct interpretation of the FG (not to mention also the problem of travelling preachers – cf. discussion in Schnackenburg, 1968; Brown, 1982; Smalley, 1984), the solution is at hand. These circumstances demanded many allusions to the FG (which we find), not to the OT. The disputes represented by the epistles have to do with the church's relation with incipient Gnosticism, not with the OT. Although some gnostics appealed to the OT, John's quarrel with his opponents has less to do with their treatment of the OT than with their treatment of the FG.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

I shall attempt to apply these findings to a number of related issues, allowing scope at points for a little more speculation.

1. The appropriation techniques in John may be similar to those found in contemporary Judaism, but the underlying hermeneutical axioms are distinctively Christian. These relate not only to christology and the way the OT is read as a prefigurement of Jesus Christ, but even to the eschatological stance of the evangelist. NT writings, not least the FG, have often been compared with the DSS in this regard. Thus Black (1986, p. 4) writes: 'Like the primitive church, the Qumrân Essenes believed they were living in the End-Time, so that many pesharim or pesharised texts are apocalyptic and eschatological.' But the understanding of 'End-Time' in the two corpora is quite different. As Fitzmyer (1960–1, p. 331) noted twenty-five years ago, the Qumran sectarians believed they were in the end times such that they emphasised the *coming fulfilment of the OT Scriptures*. The NT writers, especially John, hold they are in the end times such that they emphasise *the fulfilment of the OT Scriptures that has already taken place* – even if their perception of the tension between the 'already' and the 'not yet' also leaves them anticipating the future. If 1 John 2:18 concludes that it is the last hour, it is because many antichrists *have come* and are opposing the Christ who *has already come*. That eschatological stance becomes a hermeneutical axiom unique to Christianity; but it is especially strong in the FG, where realised or inaugurated eschatology predominates.

2. The FG, as we have seen, not only interprets the OT christologically, but presents such interpretation as a moral obligation (e.g. 5:39f, 45f); yet at the same time it acknowledges in the strongest terms that even the disciples came to a correct understanding on many points of the Scriptures only after the resurrection (e.g. 2:22; 20:8f; cf. Carson, 1982). The tension between these perspectives has three results: (a) It confirms that even the disciples who come to a correct understanding *after* the resurrection were not party to a corpus of esoteric information *before* the resurrection; nor were they gifted

with peculiar intelligence or insight. If they were chosen, they were chosen out of the world. (b) It focuses attention on Christ 'full of grace and truth'; for while the Scriptures testify to him, it transpires that those same Scriptures cannot properly be understood apart from him. It is thus a way of shifting the focus of primary revelation from the text to the person. (c) Misunderstandings in the FG whose resolution turns on the resurrection thus *cannot* be misunderstandings in John's day. For instance, the identification of Jesus' body as the real temple (John 2: 19ff) and the correlative belief in the Scripture (2:22) may not be *accepted* by Jewish opponents in John's day; but if they are in dialogue with the Johannine community at all, these matters will not be *misunderstood*. This opens up a fruitful avenue for approaching difficult questions of historicity in the FG (Carson, 1982).

3. The cumulative evidence for the importance of the OT to the FG supports the view, now common enough, that the latter was written in some sort of dialogue with the synagogue. But was it written to support the church in its interaction with Judaism, or as a direct attempt at evangelism? Can John's use of the OT help us answer that question? The dominant voices of contemporary scholarship on John hold that the evangelist is strengthening the church. With some hesitation I am attracted to the theory of van Unnik and Robinson that the FG is designed primarily to evangelise diaspora Jews; and elsewhere I have argued that syntactically 20: 31 must be rendered '...in order that you may believe that the Christ is Jesus', not 'that Jesus is the Christ' (Carson, forthcoming), thereby forcing us to conclude that the underlying question John is answering is not, 'Who is Jesus?' but 'Who is the Christ?' The latter question Christians would not ask: they already knew the answer. But it is precisely the question that Christians would seek to answer in their evangelism of Jews. Barrett (1975) has strongly objected to the view that the FG is a missionary tract for the Judaism of the diaspora, largely on the ground that there are not only Jewish but some Hellenistic and Gnostic overtones in this book as well. But that is just the point: diaspora Judaism was nothing if not diverse and frequently syncretistic. The presence of other overtones is not surprising; and even the translation of Semitic terms (e.g. 1:41f) reminds us that the Judaism with which we are dealing is not Palestinian. Moreover, this general line of thought can be strengthened if we suppose that John is not limiting himself to Jews, but is also deeply interested in the evangelism of proselytes and God-fearers, who would also be likely to have some knowledge of the OT Scriptures of which Christians claimed to be providing the true interpretation. Certainly the use of the OT in the FG is congruent with either a missionary and evangelistic *Sitz im Leben*, or with one more narrowly aimed at providing Christians with apologetic materials; but it is hard to see how it decisively favours either position.

4. Since Dodd (1952), scholars have commonly argued that the kerygma came first, and the exegesis of the OT within the church came later. Lindars (1961) went further, and argued that the Christians' choice of texts and their handling of them were decisively shaped by their apologetic concerns, i.e. by the experiences they faced in the promulgation of the kerygma. Wilcox (1979) and Black (1986) have argued in response that the OT and the interpretative traditions regarding it were the matrix out of which the kerygma sprang. The church began with the exegetical traditions of Judaism regarding the messiah and end time events, and argued that these traditions had found their fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth. But the evidence sketched in throughout this chapter suggests we are not shut up to a simple 'either/or'. On the one hand, the evangelist's frank confession that even the disciples did not understand the Scriptures until after the resurrection demonstrates that Christian theology was not simply manufactured out of pieces of the OT. The decisive impact of Jesus' ministry, death and resurrection/exaltation triggered the reflection that made sense of the OT under the revised hermeneutical axioms that nascent Christianity generated. In that sense, Dodd is right: the kerygma came first. And Lindars is right: doubtless apologetic concerns in the articulation of the kerygma triggered further exegetical reflection on the OT. But on the other hand, the same evidence insists there were teachings of Jesus regarding the OT that were there to be misunderstood. Inevitably, therefore, although the cross and exaltation proved to be the decisive turning point in the disciples' understanding, the Scriptures served to shed light on a messiah who could be both king of Israel and lamb of God, every bit as much as the cross and exaltation provided a fresh perspective from which to re-think the Scriptures. Thus 'the scriptures to a large extent guided the process of thought, and created many of the theological issues which were taken up in the New Testament' (Borgen, 1976-7, p. 70). If Moo (1983, esp. pp. 392ff; cf. also France, 1971) is right in arguing that the actual history and teaching of Jesus shaped the church's choice and handling of OT texts, in particular the passion texts, then as soon 'as the early Christians began to think and preach about the significance of Jesus' death, they must have utilised categories provided by the OT-sacrifices, the atoning death of the Servant, the innocent sufferer' (Moo, p. 394). After all, the earliest Christians were Jews before they were Christians: they needed *biblical* categories to make sense of the shattering event of the cross. Fundamental reflection on the OT was therefore necessarily generated *within* the church before it was further stimulated by apologetic needs. John's gospel, because of the interplay between its use of the OT and its handling of the theme of misunderstanding, provides particularly good access to these points.

NOTES

- 1 The idea has been taken up more recently by Reim (1974), who argues that except for the three quotations from Ps. 69 (John 2:17; 15:25; 19:28[?]) the evangelist found all of his OT quotations in various written sources. This view depends on a complex source-critical theory that has failed to win wide approval.
- 2 Cf. the detailed discussion of textual matters in Freed (1965), who shows that when John agrees exactly with an OT text it is always with the LXX (four occurrences only). In no place does John agree with the Hebrew against the LXX, with the possible exception of 19:37 [Zech. 12:10, some MSS only]. In the other instances, certainty regarding textual affinity is difficult to achieve. Other essays have suggested, however, that when theological reasons can be advanced for this or that divergence in John's quotation, the divergence is from the LXX.
- 3 Freed (1965) and others argue that ἡ γράφη in 7:42 and 17:12 refers not to the OT but to the synoptic tradition in the former case and to Jesus' words (John 6:70f) in the latter. But connexions with the OT are more plausible in both cases: cf. Bernard (1928) *in loc.*; Hanson (1983), pp. 115f.
- 4 One might add 12:34. I am not here including passages in John that draw attention to some explicit OT *event* or *theme* (e.g. 3:14; 6:32; 7:22f), which are discussed elsewhere in this chapter. For the sake of completeness, I should note the two instances where a formula introduces a quotation *not* from the OT but apparently from an antecedent teaching of Jesus (18:9 [6:37?]; 18:38 [3:14? 8:28?]).
- 5 The manna story is found in Exodus 16, but references to this 'manna' are scattered through the OT (Num. 11:6; Deut. 8:3; Josh. 5:12; Neh. 9:20; Ps. 77:24). In three of these passages (viz. Deut. 8:3; Neh. 9:20; Ps. 77:24), even though the reference is to the Exodus 16 story, 'manna' has become something of a symbol for the Lord's blessing. In Judaism of the NT period, this symbolism is enriched. Philo repeatedly allegorises the manna account; in *Leg. All.* iii. 169-76 the food of the soul is God's word (λόγος θεοῦ). In 2 Baruch, roughly contemporary with the FG, we are told that at the end of the age the 'treasury of manna' will again descend from on high, and those who come to the consummation of time will eat it in those years (29:8). Later rabbinic tradition spells out the connexion more clearly: *Mekilta* Exod. 16:25 (עֲסִי), §5 tells us: 'You shall not find it [the manna] in this age, but you shall find it in the age to come'. Cf. also *Ecclesiastes R.* 1:28. But whether these later sources reflect Jewish tradition in the first century it is impossible to say with certainty.
- 6 For full discussion of this point, cf. Carson (1981), pp. 146ff.
- 7 Under the rubric 'Scripture is explicitly cited, but without any introductory formula', Hanson (1983, pp. 117-21) includes six examples, viz. 2:17; 3:14; 6:31, 45; 7:37f; 10:34-6. But although John 3:14 includes no formula, neither is it a citation; it merely makes reference to Num. 21:8f. John 7:38, a problem passage, I have included in the list of places where John 'quotes' the OT, using a quotation formula, without it being very certain what passage or passages he has in mind. All of the other four references listed by Hanson are introduced by one formula or another, but none using πληροφοῦν. His category seems misnamed.
- 8 The Isaiah connexions are strengthened if we accept the proposal of McNeil (1977), who argues that when the Jews claim they have heard that the law insists the messiah will live forever (12:34) they are alluding to a targumic rendering of Isa. 9:5, in which the child born to the house of David is not only called 'wonderful counsellor, mighty God' but also 'he who lives forever, the anointed one' (אֲשִׁיחַ, the messiah). The importance of Isaiah to the FG was stressed by Young (1955) thirty years ago. The links

- between the servant songs and John are well developed by Moo (1983), esp. pp. 79ff.
- 9 It is possible that John was thinking of some such rendering of Isa. 6:5 as that found in the targum: Isaiah sees not 'the King, the Lord of hosts' but 'the glory of the shekinah of the King of the ages' (יִקַּר שְׂכִינַת מֶלֶךְ עֲלָמֵיָא). There would then be a greater *verbal* tie with John 1:14, 'we have seen his glory'; but there would be no difference in the *referent*, which must still be the pre-incarnate Logos.
 - 10 The absence of any connecting conjunction between the two clauses of v. 17 is probably to be explained by the explanatory value of the verse for v. 16: the realities behind the two clauses are neither merely additive nor adversative.

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