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Herausgegeben von DDr. Albert Fuchs
Professor em. Theologische Universität Linz

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Anschriften der Autoren und Autorinnen:

Dr. John Dennis, Post-Doc Researcher, K.U. Leuven
Prof. em. Dr. Albert Fuchs, Kath. Universität Linz
Prof. Dr. Beate Kowalski, University of Limerick (Ollscoil Luimnigh)
Prof. Jean-Paul Michaud, Université Saint-Paul, Ottawa
PD Dr. Hermann Josef Riedl, Universität Regensburg
Dr. Thomas Witulski, Wiss.Ass., Universität Münster

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Bestelladresse: Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt
A-4020 Linz/Austria, Bethlehemsstraße 20
email: a.fuchs@ktu-linz.ac.at

INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

HERMANN JOSEF RIEDL

Der Seewandel Jesu Mk 6,45-52 parr. Eine Epiphanieerzählung und ihre
textpragmatische Intention 05

BEATE KOWALSKI

Der Fenstersturz in Troas (Apg 20,7-12) 19

THOMAS WITULSKI

Ein neuer Ansatz zur Datierung der neutestamentlichen Johannesapokalypse 39

JEAN-PAUL MICHAUD

Effervescence in Q Studies 61

JOHN DENNIS

The Presence and Function of Second Exodus-Restoration Imagery in John 6 105

ALBERT FUCHS

Zum Stand der Synoptischen Frage – J.S. Kloppenborg 123

Zum Stand der Synoptischen Frage – Ch. Münch 145

Zum Stand der Synoptischen Frage – D.A. de Silva 173

Zum Stand der Synoptischen Frage – L.W. Hurtado 185

Zum Stand der Synoptischen Frage – R.H. Stein 193

Zum Stand der Synoptischen Frage – M. Goodacre 215

REZENSIONEN 225

Allison D. C., Testament of Abraham (Fuchs) 261

Baarlink H., Verkündigtes Heil (Fuchs) 246

Baumert N., KOINONEIN und METECHEIN - synonym? (Fuchs) 259

Burkett D., Rethinking the Gospel Sources (Fuchs) 261

Burridge R.A., What are the Gospels? (Fuchs) 265

Busse U., Das Johannesevangelium (Fuchs) 231

DeSilva D., An Introduction to the NT (Fuchs) 262

Deines R., Die Gerechtigkeit der Tora im Reich des Messias (Fuchs) 227

Delville J.-P., L'Europe de l'exégèse au XVIIe siècle (Fuchs) 260

Deming W., Paul on Marriage and Celibacy (Gmainer-Pranzl) 249

Dormeyer D., Das Markusevangelium (Fuchs,) 230

Ebel E., Die Attraktivität früher christlicher Gemeinden (Gmainer-Pranzl) 252

Eerdmans Commentary, J.D.G. Dunn - J.W. Rogerson (Fuchs) 285

Evans C.A.- E. Porter S.E, Dictionary of New Testament Background (Fuchs) 272

Fenske W., Paulus lesen und verstehen (Huber) 267

Franco E., <i>Mysterium Regni. Ministerium Verbi</i> (Fuchs)	269
Gathercole S.J., <i>Where is Boasting?</i> (Labahn)	256
Giesen H., <i>Jesu Heilsbotschaft und die Kirche</i> (Fuchs)	285
Harnack A., <i>Marcion</i> (Fuchs)	275
Head P.M., <i>Christology and the synoptic problem</i> (Fuchs)	286
Hintermaier J., <i>Die Befreiungswunder in der Apostelgeschichte</i> (Jaros)	235
Janowski B.- Wilhelm G., <i>Texte zum Rechts- und Wirtschaftsleben</i> (Fuchs)	280
Johnson L.T., <i>Brother of Jesus, Friend of God</i> (Fuchs)	241
Kamplung R., <i>Fs. Frankemölle</i> (Fuchs)	280
Klein H., <i>Lukasstudien</i> (Fuchs)	283
Köhn A., <i>Der Neutestamentler Ernst Lohmeyer</i> (Fuchs)	276
Kowalski B., <i>Ezechiel in der Offenbarung</i> (Oberforcher).....	245
Lewicki T., <i>Wort Gottes und Paraklese im Hebräerbrief</i> (Gmainer-Pranzl)	242
Luz U., <i>Das Evangelium nach Matthäus. 4. Teilband Mt 26-28</i> (Fuchs)	225
Mack B.L., <i>Wer schrieb das Neue Testament?</i> (Fuchs)	266
Mackay I. D., <i>John's Relationship with Mark</i> (Jaros)	234
McKnight S. - Osborne G.R., <i>The Face of New Testament Studies</i> (Fuchs)	264
Meyer A., <i>Mystagogie im Johannesevangelium</i> (Fuchs)	233
Miler J., <i>Les citations d'accomplissement dans Mt</i> (P.G. Müller)	228
Neuberth R., <i>Demokratie im Volk Gottes?</i> (Fuchs)	235
Nicholl C.R., <i>From Hope to Despair in Thessalonica</i> (Giesen)	239
Peres I., <i>Griechische Grabinschriften</i> (Zugmann)	277
Pietri L., <i>Die Geschichte des Christentums Bd. 1</i> (Fuchs)	251
Plümacher E., <i>Geschichte und Geschichten</i> (Fuchs)	277
Porter S.E., <i>Reading the Gospels Today</i> (Fuchs)	253
Reid D., <i>The IVP Dictionary of the New Testament</i> (Fuchs)	270
Roose H., <i>Eschatologische Mitherrschaft</i> (Giesen)	247
Schneider S., <i>Auferstehen</i> (Giesen)	237
Schweitzer A., <i>Vorträge, Vorlesungen, Aufsätze</i> (Fuchs)	270
Stanton-Longenecker-Barton, <i>The Holy Spirit and Christian Origins</i> (Giesen)	268
Theißen G., <i>Die Jesusbewegung</i> (Fuchs)	281
Thyen H., <i>Das Johannesevangelium</i> (Fuchs)	284
Trebilco P., <i>The Early Christians in Ephesus from Paul to Ignatius</i> (Fuchs)	272
Wahlen C., <i>Jesus and the Impurity of Spirits in the Synoptic Gospels</i> (Fuchs)	259
Wilckens U., <i>Theologie des Neuen Testaments, Bd. 1-2</i> (Fuchs)	255
Winter B.W., <i>Roman Wives, Roman Widows</i> (Pratscher)	273
Witherington B., <i>Revelation</i> (Kowalski)	243
Zimmermann R., <i>Christologie der Bilder im JohEv</i> (Grohmann)	232

The Presence and Function of Second Exodus-Restoration Imagery in John 6

The hopes and promises of Israel's restoration were often communicated in the language of the great divine deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt under Moses. For instance, in Isa 11.16, the promises of gathering and unifying Israel from dispersion (vv.11-13) are compared to the exodus redemption as follows: "So there will be a highway from Assyria for the remnant that is left of his people, as there was for Israel when they came up from the land of Egypt" (v.16). Similarly, Jer 16.14-15 states: "Therefore, the days are surely coming, says the Lord, when it shall no longer be said, 'As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of Egypt', but, 'As the Lord lives who brought the people of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of the lands where he had driven them'. For I will bring them back to their own land that I gave to their ancestors". Zechariah's promises of restoration to the post-exilic community are termed in exodus-redemption language: "I will bring them home from the land of Egypt, and gather them from Assyria; I will bring to the land of Gilead and to Lebanon, until there is no room for them. They shall pass through the sea of distress, and the waves of the sea shall be struck down, and all the depths of the Nile dried up" (Zech 10.10-11).¹ Israel's restoration would thus be a kind of a *new* or *second exodus*² and as such the first exodus became the paradigmatic event for Israel's later restoration and deliverance.

This is illustrated in Josephus' description of Theudas and the Egyptian Jew. Both of these figures were revolutionaries who offered their fellow Israelites exodus-like deliverance. Theudas, a self-proclaimed prophet, promised that he would part the Jordan river and would lead his followers safely through it, actions that clearly evoke Moses-exodus imagery (see Ant 20.97-98). Other Moses-exodus imagery is employed in the story of the Egyptian Jew (Ant 20.167-170; Bell 2.258-

¹ See also Isa 27.12-13; 40.1-5; 51.9-11; Jer 23.7-8; 31.31-32; 32.20-21,36-39.

² The designations *new* or *second exodus* are, for the present purposes, virtually interchangeable. Though *A.C. Brunson*, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John (WUNT, 154), Tübingen, 2003, prefers the term *new exodus*, his definition will suffice for our term *second exodus*: second exodus "adequately describes the eschatological program presented by the Prophets and also ties these longings to the paradigmatic deliverance in Israel's past". Second exodus bests "describes the whole complex of restoration hopes even though the primary referent is to the 'return from exile'" (154). In other words, the second exodus return from exile includes the larger complex of expectations such as the return of YHWH, Israel's deliverance from their enemies, and a new Temple.

263). The symbolic and eschatological actions of these deliverance figures³ reenacted certain aspects of the exodus in service of what these prophetic figures and their followers believed to be the eschatological deliverance of Israel, or at least a remnant of Israel. This, I would argue, is precisely the function of exodus imagery in John's Gospel.

I. A Survey of Exodus Imagery in the Fourth Gospel

The exodus theme or typology⁴ appears at crucial places throughout the Gospel. In Joh 1.14-18, the readers are encouraged to interpret Jesus' ministry against the backdrop of the exodus. The term σκηνώω used to describe the Logos' dwelling recalls the tabernacle dwelling of God in the Sinai wilderness.⁵ Believers behold the "glory" of the Son in his "dwelling" among them (1.14), recalling the glory-presence of God in the tabernacle.⁶

C. Evans is probably correct to argue that "the imagery and context makes it clear that the giving of the law at Sinai, particularly the second giving following the incident of the golden calf (Exod. 32), clearly lies behind the second half of the Prologue (Jn 1.14-18)".⁷ The fact that Moses is not permitted to "see my face, for no one can see me and live" (Ex 33.20), stands in stark contrast to Jesus in Joh 1.18: θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. The incarnate Logos is uniquely able to "exegete" (ἐξηγέομαι, 1.18) the Father since he was "with God" from all eternity (1.1b) and "was God" (1.1c; cf. 1.18). It is thus not surprising that most interpreters believe that the primary background to the language and theology of 1.14ff. (particularly σκηνώω used in connection with δόξα, the phrase πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, and the Moses – Jesus comparisons) is the Sinai-Exodus tradition found in Ex 33-34.⁸

³ D. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World*, Grand Rapids, 126-162 and H.L. Hendrix, *Theudas*, *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 (1992) 528.

⁴ Cf. O.A. Piper, *Unchanging Promises: Exodus in the New Testament*, in: *Interpretation* 11 (1957) 20 and Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, 156-157.

⁵ E.g., Ex 25.9; 26.1, 6, 7, 9, 12; 28.43; 29.4, 10, 11, 30.

⁶ Ex 25.8; 33.8-9, 11; 40.34; Num 35.34.

⁷ C. Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue* (JSNT SS, 89), Sheffield, 1993, 79, 81. Cf. C. Koester, *Dwelling of God, The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature, and the New Testament* (CBQ.MS, 22), Washington, D.C., 1989, 103-104.

⁸ E.g., K. Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium* (TKNT, 4/2), Stuttgart 2001, 61-63; U. Wilckens, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (NTD, 4), Göttingen 1998, 33-34; G.R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC, 36), Waco 1986, 14; R.E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, I (AnBib), New York 1966, 32-33; R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John II*,

The ministry of John the Baptist is set in the wilderness (Joh 1.23) and his self-proclaimed mission statement in 1.23 is a quotation of Isa 40.3, a passage that envisions the restoration of Israel as a repeating of the exodus deliverance. Part of the Baptist's identification of Jesus as Israel's Messiah (1.31) was his witness that the Spirit descending on Jesus and that Jesus, as the bearer of the Spirit, is the one who will bestow the Spirit (1.32-33). The possible, if not likely, background to these ideas is the Isaianic restoration as narrated in Isa 11.1-3. Here, the Spirit will "rest" on the Davidic messianic "branch". Here too, the restoration of Israel is associated with the exodus deliverance (Isa 11.16).

The importance and dominance of the Passover in John's Gospel is well known. There is at least ten references to it in the Gospel.⁹ In Judaism, the exodus was celebrated every year at Passover which "created the classic Jewish metanarrative, within which the hope for return from exile made sense, and in terms of which that return was described in some of the classic prophetic texts".¹⁰ Similarly, Brunson argues that "to celebrate the Passover was to re-tell the exodus story, and in a sense to enact proleptically the return from exile".¹¹ I am convinced that the Passover likewise functions in John to evoke eschatological salvation and restoration.

In the same context as the Baptist's quotation of Isa 40.3 and the revelation of Jesus as the bearer and bestower of the Spirit, the Baptist declares that Jesus is the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1.29, 36). The Baptist's confession here likely functions as the *programmatische Leitthese* for the Christology of the entire Gospel.¹² Though there are a number of possible interpretations for the "lamb of God", it seems that the Passover lamb is the best candidate due mainly to

New York 1987 (Germ. org. 1971), 228-229; *S. Harstine*, Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques (JSNT SS, 229), Sheffield, 2002, 45-49; *Evans*, Word and Glory, 79-80; *Koester*, Dwelling of God, 103-104; P. Borgen, *Philo, John and Paul: New Perspectives on Judaism and Early Christianity* (BJSt, 131), Atlanta, 1987, 80; *A. Hanson*, John 1.14-18 and Exodus xxxiv, in: NTS 23 (1977) 90-101; *M.D. Hooker*, The Johannine Prologue and the Messianic Secret, in: NTS 21 (1975), 53-56; *M.-E. Boismard*, Le Prologue de Saint Jean (LD, 11), Paris 1953, 66-79.

⁹ Joh 2.13, 23; 4.45; 6.4; 11.55; 12.1; 13.1; 18.28, 39; 19.14 and perhaps 5.1.

¹⁰ *N.T. Wright*, Jesus and the Victory of God, Minneapolis 1996, 577.

¹¹ *Brunson*, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John, 156.

¹² *T. Knöppler*, Die theologia crucis des Johannesevangelium: Das Verständnis des Todes Jesu im Rahmen der johanneischen Inkarnations- und Erhöhungschristologie (WMANT, 68), Neukirchen 1994, 67; *R. Metzner*, Das Verständnis der Sünde im Johannesevangelium (WUNT, 122), Tübingen 2000, 9, 37; *J. Frey*, Die "theologia crucifixi" des Johannesevangeliums, in: *A. Dettwiler - J. Zumstein*, Kreuzestheologie im Neuen Testament (WUNT, 151), Tübingen 2002, 200-201; *Brunson*, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John, 156-157.

the internal connections in the narrative itself.¹³ This is confirmed by the clear Passover associations in the passion narrative and specifically surrounding the cross event (18.28, 39; 19.14, 29,31-37).¹⁴

Exodus imagery is nowhere more concentrated and evident than in Joh 6. In this long chapter, exodus symbolism and imagery are explicitly and implicitly woven into its argument. In light of this, the purpose of this study is to investigate the presence and function of the exodus-restoration imagery in John 6 and its significance for John's portrayal of Jesus in this chapter.

II. The Function of Second Exodus/Restoration Imagery in John 6

The Context

Joh 6.1ff comes on the heels of 5.45-47 where Jesus argues that the Jews' rejection of him is in reality a rejection of Moses and the Law, since Moses' writings point to Jesus (5.46). Thus, if they reject Jesus, they ironically reject Moses in whom they have set their hope. Chapter 6 then spells out more clearly in what sense Moses points to Jesus. In this chapter, Jesus' actions and words, along with the setting, echo Moses and the exodus: Jesus teaches the multitude on a mountain; his sign is associated with the Prophet like Moses (Joh 6.14; cf. Deut 18.18); he leads the disciples safely through the sea (6.18-23); the bread or manna he gives is compared to the manna given under Moses in the wilderness (6.31-33, 35, 49-51) and, in this context, the multitude "grumble" (6.43), echoing the "grumbling" of Israel in the Sinai wilderness. All of these elements serve to evoke the exodus in order to say something about the meaning of Jesus. Thus, from beginning of this chapter, John seems to be at pains to argue that Jesus is the one who brings a *second* exodus deliverance to Israel¹⁵ and consequently there are a number of intertextual allusions that recall this second exodus deliverance or the restoration of Israel.

¹³ Brunson, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John, 156.

¹⁴ J. Zumstein, L'interprétation johannique de la mort du Christ, in: *F. van Segbroeck - C.M. Tuckett - G. van Belle - J. Verheyden*, *The Four Gospels* (=Fs. F. Neiryneck) (BETL, 100), Leuven 1992, 2131; *Knöppler*, *theologia crucis*, 97; *Metzner*, *Verständnis der Sünde*, 267.

¹⁵ So Brunson, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John, 158-159; *S. Hamid-Khani*, *Revelation and Concealment of Christ: A Theological Inquiry into the Elusive Language of the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT, 2/120), Tübingen 2000, 262-263; *D.M. Swancutt*, *Hunger Assuaged by the Bread from Heaven: "Eating Jesus" as the Isaian Call to Belief: The Confluence of Isaiah 55 and Psalm 78 (77) in John 6.22-71*, in: C.A. Evans and J.A. Sanders, *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel* (JNT SS, 148), Sheffield 1997, 246-247; *Beasley-Murray*, *John*, 87; *J.L. Martyn*, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, New York 1968, 100-101; 125-127.

The "Prophet like Moses" and Signs

Jesus' miraculous feeding of the five thousand is specifically set close to the time of the Passover feast (6.4) and is designated a "sign" (v.14).¹⁶ The multitude associates Jesus' "sign" with that of the eschatological prophet like Moses in v.14: οἱ οὖν ἄνθρωποι ἰδόντες ὃ ἐποίησεν σημεῖον ἔλεγον ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον.¹⁷ These associations between the "prophet" and "signs" as well as the exodus-Moses comparisons later on in Joh six make this reference likely.¹⁸ The other places in John where Jesus is associated with the "prophet" also probably refer to the expected "prophet like Moses" of Deut 18.15, 18 (cf. 1.25; 4.19; 6.14; 7.40, 52¹⁹).²⁰

The expected prophet like Moses appears in texts designated by C. Koester as the "hidden tabernacle tradition."²¹ This expected prophetic figure is directly associated with the eschatological day of salvation and restoration. For instance, the *Life of Jeremiah*²² speaks of a prophet who, before the destruction of the Temple,

¹⁶ P⁷⁵ B 091 read the plural here (ἄ...σημεῖα) instead of the singular. It appears however that the plural arose due to assimilation to 2.23 (τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίη) and 6.2 (τὰ σημεῖα ἃ ἐποίη). In addition, it is the people's seeing of the feeding sign (singular) which motivates their identification of Jesus with the "prophet". So *Beasley-Murray*, John, 84; *B. Metzger*, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Stuttgart ²1994, 181; *Brown*, John I, 234; *Bultmann*, John, 213 n.6; *Meeks*, Prophet-King, 88.

¹⁷ See especially *Meeks*, Prophet-King, 87-91. Most other interpreters also make this connection. E.g., *Wengst*, Johannesevangelium, 1.223; *Wilcken*, Johannes, 96-97; *F. Manns*, L'Evangile à la lumière du Judaïsme (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta, 33), Jerusalem 1991, 146; *J. Becker*, Das Evangelium nach Johannes 4/1 (ÖTBK), Gütersloh, 193; *Schnackenburg*, St.John II, 18; *Brown*, John I, 234; *C.K. Barrett*, The Gospel According to St John, London 1965, 231.

¹⁸ See *Brown*, John I, 234.

¹⁹ See *G. Reim*, Studien zum alttestamentlichen Hintergrund des Johannesevangeliums (SNTS.MS, 22), Cambridge 1974), 119-129, for an analysis of the numerous references to the eschatological prophet in John's Gospel. See too *Meeks*, Prophet-King, 318ff. and *M. de Jonge*, Jesus as Prophet and King in the Fourth Gospel, *ETL* 49 (1973), 160-177.

²⁰ The expectation of the prophet like Moses of Deut 18 is also clearly present in the Qumran work known as 4QTestimonia. Interestingly, Acts 3.22 directly identifies Jesus with the Prophet like Moses of Deut 18.15.

²¹ *Koester*, Dwelling of God, 175. For a full accounting for these traditions and the texts that preserves them, see especially *Koester*, Dwelling of God, 48-58; 175-177; *M.F. Collins*, The Hidden Vessels in Samaritan Traditions, *JSJ* 3 (1972), 97-116; *H.G. Kippenberg*, Garizim und Synagoge: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur samaritanischen Religion der aramäischen Periode (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, 30), New York/Berlin 1971, 234-254.

²² This work is part of the collection known as the *Lives of the Prophets*. The most probable date seems to be somewhere in the first quarter of the first century C.E. It is generally agreed that the original work was written by a Jew although the document is only known in

rescued the ark and the holy things in it by hiding them in a rock (2.11-12). This signified that “the Lord has gone away from Zion into heaven and will come again in power” (2.13). However, at the end of times, Aaron will bring out the ark and Moses, “God’s chosen one”,²³ will open the tablets in it (2.14-15). Thus, in the resurrection, the ark will be resurrected and will come out of the rock and be established on Mount Sinai, and all “the saints will be gathered to it there” (2.15). The ingathering here is associated with the eschatological appearing of the Sinai presence of God.

The first century C.E. Samaritan traditions which surface in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* 18.85-88 perhaps also evidence the expectation of a prophet like Moses, or one associated with Moses, who will be instrumental in the eschatological restoration.²⁴ Josephus tells the story of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome toward the end of Pontius Pilate’s reign (35-36 C.E.). A certain unnamed man convinced a crowd to go together to Mount Garizim. The man promised that “he would show them the sacred vessels which were buried there, where Moses had deposited them” (*Ant.* 18.85).²⁵ As the crowd prepared to climb the mountain, “they began receiving there those who were gathering, since they planned to make the ascent to the mountain as a great throng”.²⁶ Whether the prophet here is the prophet like Moses of Deut 18²⁷ or someone associated with Moses,²⁸ the connection with Moses is clear.²⁹

Christian manuscripts and there are Christian interpolations in the text. See *D.R.A. Hare*, *The Lives of the Prophets*, in: Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* II, 380-381.

²³ *Koester*, *Dwelling of God*, 52, notes that this designation has “messianic overtones (cf. Luke 23.35)”.

²⁴ *Collins*, *Samaritan Traditions*, 115, has argued that Josephus’ evidence here “has not been taken seriously enough as an important witness to first century Samaritan belief in the restoration of true worship in the eschatological age”.

²⁵ Translation from *L.H. Feldman*, *Josephus IX*, in: *L.H. Feldman*, *Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge – London MCMLXIX.

²⁶ Translation from *Koester*, *Dwelling of God*, 55.

²⁷ *Collins*, *Samaritan Traditions*, 110, argues that the unnamed man in Josephus is in fact the eschatological prophet like Moses and associates this Samaritan tradition with John 4.19, 25.

²⁸ *Meeks*, *Prophet-King*, 250,

²⁹ *Koester*, *Dwelling of God*, 56, argues with regard to Josephus’ evidence here that “the Samaritans expected the vessels to be revealed to those who gathered together on Mt. Garizim. They waited for many to assemble and planned to ascend to the mountain in a group. The procedure resembled a pilgrimage and probably reflected the hope of eschatological ingathering”.

There is additional Samaritan evidence that shows that the Samaritans expected the reappearance of the tabernacle and the restoration of the cult in the eschatological day of vindication and restoration. The fourth century C.E. Samaritan (Aramaic) work known as the *Memar Marqah* (*MM*) contains the teachings of an influential fourth century Samaritan teacher named Marqah. He taught that the tabernacle ("dwelling of God"), which was associated with Mount Garizim, had been concealed due to sin (*MM* V.2; 120; ET 197).³⁰ The restoration of the hidden tabernacle as the eschatological blessing was expected on Mount Garizim where "what is hidden there be revealed" (*MM* III.4; 62; ET 97).³¹ The restorer of the tabernacle and the cult in the day of restoration is none other than Moses, the Taheb.³² "The great prophet Moses planted a sanctuary. All who sought the Lord would gather at it [sanctuary] (Ex XXXIII.7). So in the Day of Vengeance the great prophet Moses will do and he will deliver the beloved and destroy all the enemies" (*MM* IV.3; 89; ET 143). Koester argues "that this passage refers to the future coming of Moses, the reestablishment of the tabernacle, the gathering of the faithful, and the deliverance from oppression".³³ Moses is clearly a messiah figure and it appears that Deut 18.18 "was the basic text for the Samaritan Messiah or Taheb".³⁴ The Johannine connection with Samaritan expectation is particularly evident in Joh 4 where Jesus is portrayed as the fulfillment of Samaritan Messianic expectation.³⁵ And, in addition, it is not without significance that the prophet like Moses is a significant characterization of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel.

As we have already mentioned, the multitude associate their expectation of the prophet like Moses with a "sign" (Joh 6.14). On the basis of OT and Jewish backgrounds, this association is understandable. It is recognized that the primary point

³⁰ The citation procedure of the *Memar Marqah* will be as follows: The book number is represented in Roman numerals followed by the section number and page numbers of *J. Macdonald's* Aramaic text (*Memar Marqa: The Teachings of Marqa* [BZAW, 84] Berlin, 1963]). The page numbers in Macdonald's English translation are also provided.

³¹ The significance of this passage is stated well by *H.G. Kippenburg*, *Garizim und Synagoge: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur samaritanischen Religion der aramäischen Period* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, 30), NY – Berlin 1971, 240, "Dieser Satz beschreibt die Hoffnung derer, die oben auf dem Garizim wohnen. Sie erwarten die Offenbarung des Verborgenen, womit der Miskan gemeint sein dürfte. Hier auf dem Garizim stand einst der Miskan, hier wird er in der neuen Zeit des Heils wieder stehen".

³² See *Collins*, *Samaritan Traditions*, 113 and *Kippenburg*, *Garizim und Synagoge*, 241.

³³ Koester, *Dwelling of God*, 57. So also *Kippenburg*, *Garizim und Synagoge*, 241.

³⁴ *J. Bowman*, *Samaritan Studies*, *BJRL* 40 (1958), 300.

³⁵ *J. McHugh*, *In Him was Life*, in: *J.D.G. Dunn*, *Jews and Christians: The Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, Grand Rapids/Cambridge 1999, 130-134; *Bowman*, *Samaritan Studies*, 299-302.

of contact that gives Johannine symbolism and signs their reference points are fundamentally the OT and Jewish world.³⁶ The more or less established symbols drawn from Judaism however are given new significance in terms of the Fourth Gospel's Christology.³⁷ Brunson's judgment that "the signs of the Fourth Gospel find their most natural background in the events of the Exodus"³⁸ and are associated with the signs of Moses.³⁹

The fact that Moses, as the shepherd and prophet of Israel, was uniquely the one to whom God spoke "face to face" is clear from passages such as Exod 33.11; Num 12.2-8; and Deut 34.10-12. The last passage here is particularly instructive. Moses' unique prophetic office was grounded in the fact that "the Lord knew him face to face" and as such "no prophet has risen in Israel *like* Moses" (Deut 34.10). Moses' unique prophetic role here is evidenced by God's "sending" of Moses to do "signs and wonders" in order to bring about the exodus of Israel - their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt (Deut 34.11). These statements in Deut 34.10-11 close the book of Deuteronomy and specifically recall the Mosaic promises that "the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet *like* me from among you" (Deut 18.15). The expectation then is that the prophet whom the Lord will raise up will likewise be "sent" by YHWH to perform "signs and wonders" for Israel's deliverance. There is sufficient evidence that an expectation of Moses-like signs leading to Moses-like deliverance, grounded in these Deuteronomy passages, was very much alive in the first century C.E. We have already mentioned the so-called prophets in Josephus above (Theudas and the Egyptian Jew) who would perform "signs and wonders" in their second-exodus like deliverance (Bell 2.258-263; Ant 20.167-170). In addition, Josephus mentions another character, Jonathan, one of the Sicarii, who after the great war (late 70's) also gained a following and led them into the desert, promising them a display of "signs and apparitions" (τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα) (Bell 7.438). These prophet-like figures displayed signs to their followers purposely evoking the Exodus signs of Moses.⁴⁰

³⁶ Jones, *Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John* (JSNT.SS, 145), Sheffield 1997, 25; A. Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*, Philadelphia 1983, 184; Koester, *Symbolism*, 19; C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge 1953, 137.

³⁷ Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 184.

³⁸ Brunson, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John, 161.

³⁹ R.H. Smith, *Exodus Typology in the Fourth Gospel*, *JBL* 81 (1962), 161; J.J. Enz, *The Book of Exodus as a Literary Type for the Gospel of John*, *JBL* 76 (1957), *Brown*, John I, lx.

⁴⁰ R. Gray, *Prophetic Figures in Late Second Temple Palestine: The Evidence from Josephus*, Oxford/NY 1993, 112-144; M. Hooker, *The Signs of a Prophet: The Prophetic Actions of Jesus*, London 1997, 14.

The use of the phrase *τέρατα καὶ σημεῖα* here is quite telling. The performance of “wonders and signs” is uniquely a description of the deeds of either YHWH or YHWH’S deeds *through* the Deuteronomistic Moses⁴¹ as the instruments by which Israel was delivered from Egypt. In light of the symbolic eschatological actions⁴² of these “prophets”, Evans’ conclusions seem justified:

It is very probable that both of these men promised a new conquest of the land, perhaps reflecting hopes of an eschatological jubilee in which the dispossessed could reclaim their lost patrimony, and, in keeping with the requirement of Deuteronomy 18, offered confirming signs.⁴³

But even before these first century C.E. prophetic figures, exodus-like signs and wonders were expected in association with the restoration of Israel in the second century B.C.E. book of Sirach. Sirach 36, a prayer for the restoration of Israel, includes pleas for freedom from the foreign domination of the Seleucids (36.1-4,12), the “gathering” (*συνάγω*) of all the tribes of Jacob (v.13), and a new experience of God’s glory in Zion (v.19). In this context Ben Sira entreats God to “give new signs and work other wonders (*ἐγκαίνισον σημεῖα καὶ ἀλλοίωσον θαυμάσια*); make your hand and right arm glorious” (36.6-7).⁴⁴ This language clearly recalls the “signs and wonders” God did to liberate Israel from the bondage of Egypt and thus Ben Sira appeals to God here “to repeat the ‘signs and wonders’ that long ago he had done in Egypt when he liberated his people from bondage”.⁴⁵ The term *θαυμάσιος* is used in the Pentateuch and elsewhere for the “wonders” that God performed in delivering Israel from Egypt.⁴⁶ In Deut 34.12 it is said that God did *τά θαυμάσια τὰ μεγάλα*, along with *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* (v.11), through

⁴¹ Deut 4.34; 6.22; 7.19; 11.13; 28.46; 29.2; 34.11. The phrase appears four times in Exodus (7.3,9; 11.9,10) and in Jer 32.20-21 (LXX: 39.20-21) in connection with the signs and wonders the God performed to deliver Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

⁴² *Hendrix*, Theudas, 528; *Aune*, Prophecy, 129.

⁴³ C.A. Evans, Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels, in: *Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity and Restoration* (Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums, 39), Leiden 1997, 269. In regard to these “prophets”, *R.L. Webb*, *John the Baptizer and Prophet: A Socio-Historical Study* (JSNT.SS, 62), Sheffield 1991, 347, has argued that “these prophetic figures called the people to gather together and participate in a symbolic action reminiscent of their past religious heritage, especially the events associated with the Exodus and Conquest”. See also *E.P. Sanders*, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE*, London – Philadelphia 1992, 286 and *R.A. Horsley* and *J.S. Hanson*, *Bandits, Prophets and Messiahs: Popular Movements at the Time of Jesus*, Edinburgh 1985.

⁴⁴ Translation and versification are from the NRSV.

⁴⁵ A.A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Introduction and Commentary* (AnBib), New York 1987, 421-422.

⁴⁶ Ex 3.20; 15.11; 34.10; Ps 78.11-12; 106.7; Mic 7.15.

Moses for the deliverance of Israel. The exodus background to σημεῖα καὶ θαυμάσια in Sir 36.6 is further strengthened by the clear exodus motifs in Sir 24.⁴⁷

There is yet further evidence, roughly contemporaneous with the Fourth Gospel, that Moses-like signs were expected and associated with restoration. "Signs" in the late first century apocalypse of *4 Ezra* (6.20; 7.26; 8.63; 14.44) are associated with the events known as the messianic woes or the "apocalyptic timetable".⁴⁸ When the "humiliation of Zion is complete and when the seal is placed upon the age which is about to pass away, then I shall show these signs" (6.20); when the signs come to pass, the new Jerusalem and "my son the Messiah shall be revealed" (7.26-28).⁴⁹ Thus, the signs in *4 Ezra* are eschatological and messianic in nature - though the Messiah does not directly perform the signs. The passage though that is most in keeping with the Mosaic signs in the OT and Josephus is *4 Ezra* 13.44-50. Here, in the context of the messianic restoration of Israel,⁵⁰ the end time gathering together of all the tribes of Israel is pictured as an event that is likened to the exodus "signs" that the Most High performed when he stopped the channels of the river so that his people could pass through to the promised land (14.44-45). The end time restoration will likewise be a kind of second exodus, for "the Most High will stop the channels of the river *again*, so that they may be able to pass over". Those who will "pass over" are those who will be "gathered together" (14.47), and in the context this is clear restoration language.

These examples at least indicate that eschatological and restorational Moses-like "signs" were expected by some Jews from the mid-second century B.C.E. to the late first century C.E. It is reasonable therefore to assume that the readers of the Fourth Gospel would have heard Jesus' signs in a similar way. With this background in mind, it should not be difficult to see that Jesus' feeding sign on the mountain would suggest that he is the eschatological prophet like Moses who performs exodus-like signs in order to bring restoration to Israel.

The Crossing of the Sea

The appearing of Jesus to his distressed disciples as they crossed to the other side of the sea (6.16-21) may be a purposeful reenactment of the Red Sea crossing and thus again bringing to the reader's mind second exodus imagery. Brown points out that this would be consistent with the reference to LXX Ps 77.24 in John 6.31

⁴⁷ The reference in Sir 36.7 to the glorification of God's hand (δόξασον χεῖρα) may be an echo of τὴν χεῖρα τὴν κραταίαν in Deut 34.12.

⁴⁸ *M. Stone*, *Fourth Ezra* (Hermeneia), Minneapolis 1990, 294.

⁴⁹ All translations of *4 Ezra* are from *B.M. Metzger*, *The Fourth Book of Ezra*, in: *J.H. Charlesworth*, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha II* (Anchor Bible Reference Library), New York 1985.

⁵⁰ The Messiah "gathers... the ten tribes which were led away into captivity" and unifies Israel and Judah (*4 Ezra* 13.34-41, 47-50).

(see below) since LXX Ps 77.13 refers to God's miraculous second exodus dividing of the sea so that Israel could pass through it.⁵¹ In fact, Jesus' declaration to the disciples, ἐγὼ εἰμι· μὴ φοβείσθε, (6.20) may be an allusion to the theophany in Ps 77.17-20 (LXX 76.17-20) where God comes to the aid of his people and leads them through the sea at the exodus. Similarly, Jesus in John 6 appears to his disciples and leads them through the sea, evoking a second exodus deliverance.⁵²

True Manna

As the narrative continues, the symbolic value of the feeding sign is made more clear: Jesus' provision of bread for the people (vv.3-13) is symbolic of his provision of the true bread or manna that will last forever, and this heavenly manna is nothing other than Jesus himself (vv.27,33,35,41,50,51,54,58). Whereas Moses, or the prophet like Moses, is alluded to at v.14, Moses/exodus typology is made explicit in vv.30-51. The tenor of the exchange between the multitude (designated "the Jews" in v.52) and Jesus in these verses progressively becomes more confrontational. After Jesus' rebuke of the multitude in vv.26-27, namely, that they are seeking him only for the *material* food he provided for them, he admonishes them that they should rather seek him for the food that will never perish but will endure to eternal life (v.27). But they again demand a sign that would authenticate his words: τί οὖν ποιεῖς σὺ σημεῖον, ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεῦσωμέν σοι τί ἐργάζῃ (v.30). The request for a sign here is directly linked to the contrast that the multitude sets up between the exodus provision of manna in the wilderness and the sign that they require from Jesus: οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν τὸ μάννα ἔφαγον ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, καθὼς ἐστὶν γεγραμμένον· ἄρτον ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς φαγεῖν (v.31).⁵³ The implication seems to be something close to a challenge: can you, Jesus, authenticate yourself with a similar "sign from heaven"?⁵⁴ As Brown notes, "the challenge to Jesus to produce manna or its equivalent as a sign is quite understandable if they thought of him as the prophet-like-Moses".⁵⁵ In this regard, it is significant to note

⁵¹ So Brown, John I, 255 and Brunson, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John,

⁵² So Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, 158-159 and Beasley-Murray, *John*, 89. B. Gärtner, John 6 and the Jewish Passover (Coniectanea Neotestamentica, 17), Lund/Copenhagen 1959, 28, relates the ἐγὼ εἰμι of John 6.20 to the liturgical use of *ani* or *ani hu* on the great festivals and particularly its use in the Passover Haggadah. Bultmann, John, 216 n.1, also recognizes the theophonic character of ἐγὼ εἰμι of John 6.20.

⁵³ LXX Ps 77.24 is the source of the Scripture quotation here (καὶ ἔβρεξεν αὐτοῖς μάννα φαγεῖν καὶ ἄρτον οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς). See M.J.J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel: Studies in Textual Form* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology, 15), Kampen 1996, 47-55 and B.G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship between Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John* (SBL.DS, 133), Atlanta 1992, 50-57.

⁵⁴ The request for an authenticating sign is similar to the Jews' request of such a sign in 2.18.

⁵⁵ Brown, John I, 265. Similarly, Moody Smith, John, 152.

that the tradition in 2 *Baruch* that associates the eschatological appearing of the "Anointed One" (2 Bar 29.3) with the expectation that "the treasury of manna will come down again from on high, and they will eat of it in those years..." (29.8) shows that in this roughly contemporaneous (with the FG) work the messianic age and the Messiah are associated with a new experience of heavenly manna.⁵⁶

Jesus responds to the demand for a sign by arguing (1) that God was the one who nourished the people in the exodus wilderness, not Moses and (2) that it is God who now offers the *true* manna from heaven. The shift in tenses here may be significant. Verse 32 states that "Moses *did not give* (δέδωκεν) to you the bread from heaven but my Father *is giving* (δίδωσιν) you the true bread from heaven". The significance may be that "the *true* bread is in any case not the manna in the wilderness but what the Father *is now giving*".⁵⁷ Thus, there seems to be a typological correspondence between the first and the second exodus here. In the first exodus, God provided, through the agency of Moses, for his people Israel by both delivering them from Egypt's bondage and feeding them in the wilderness. Likewise, God is *now* acting through the true provider and deliverer of Israel and the one who can give true manna, Jesus himself. Therefore, it is not overstating the case to say that Jesus here offers to lead a *second* exodus for Israel.

Jesus' saying in John 6.35 (ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ἄρτος τῆς ζωῆς· ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ πεινάσῃ, καὶ ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ οὐ μὴ διψήσῃ πώποτε) may also contain second exodus symbolism but this time via wisdom traditions. Sophia makes a very similar claim in Sirach 24.19: "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits".⁵⁸ But the parallel between Jesus' claim in John 6.35 (the one comes to me shall never hunger or thirst again) and his claim that those who "eat me" shall live forever in 6.58, provide an interesting contrast to Sophia's words in Sir. 24.21: "Those who eat of me will hunger for more, and those who drink of me will thirst for more". Those who feed on Jesus, the embodiment of the wisdom of God, shall be nourished forever. Since sophia in Sir. 24.23 is associated with the Torah and specifically with the Mosaic covenant, the idea present in John 6 may be that Jesus is the true fulfillment of the Torah, the one whom Moses pointed to and wrote about (John 5.46).

*D.M. Swancutt*⁵⁹ argues that the theme of the messianic banquet or feast may also lie behind John 6.22-71.⁶⁰ Swancutt's detailed and persuasive argument that

⁵⁶ A number of scholars have noted that 2 Bar 29.8 may be illuminating for John 6.31ff. See *R. Kysar*, *John*, Minneapolis 1986, 99; *Barrett*, *St John*, 288.

⁵⁷ *D.A. Carson*, *The Gospel according to John*, Grand Rapids 1991, 286.

⁵⁸ We have already pointed out the exodus symbolism in Sir. 24, see above.

⁵⁹ *Swancutt*, *Hunger*, 234-236.

⁶⁰ See also *A. Feuillet*, *Les thèmes bibliques majeures du discours sur le pain de vie*, in: *Études johanniques* (Museum Lessianum Section biblique, 4), Bruges 1962, 65-76, who

Isa 55 and specifically the eschatological feast of Isa 55.1-5 are echoed in John 6 heightens the second exodus, or restoration, concern of John here. Swancutt shows that the banquet in Isa 55 is to be celebrated upon Israel's return from exile (55.10-11) and this, she believes, is John's theological interest as well: Jesus is offering to Israel a second exodus, a return from exile.⁶¹

The use of the verb γογγύζω ("to grumble", "to complain") to describe both the response of the multitude (6.41,43; cf. 7.12) and the disciples (6.61) seems also to suggest exodus symbolism. The "grumbling" here recalls Israel's "grumbling" (γογγύζω, διαγογγύζω, γογγυσμός) against Moses during the exodus-wilderness wanderings about their dissatisfaction with precisely God's provisions.⁶² The multitude, and even some disciples, reenact Israel's lack of faith in the God of Moses evidenced by their "grumbings". But this time, the multitude grumbles not against Moses, but against the Messiah of Israel.

Scripture Citations/Allusions

The Scripture citation in the bread of life discourse (6.45) adds further support to a second exodus/restoration concern in John 6. Jesus responds to the people's grumbling (6.41,43) in 6.44 by saying that no one can come to him unless the Father draws them (οὐδείς δύναται ἔλθειν πρὸς με εἰάν μὴ ὁ πατήρ ὁ πέμψας με ἔλκυσῃ αὐτόν)⁶³ and then he continues by supporting this statement with a reference to the "prophets" in v.45: ἔστιν γεγραμμένον ἐν τοῖς προφήταις· καὶ ἔσονται πάντες διδασκατοὶ θεοῦ· πᾶς ὁ ἀκούσας παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μαθὼν ἔρχεται πρὸς ἐμέ. It is generally agreed that v.45b (καὶ ἔσονται πάντες διδασκατοὶ θεοῦ) is a quotation from LXX Isa 54.13a: καὶ πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς σου διδασκατοὺς θεοῦ.⁶⁴ For our purposes it is important to point out that the context of Isa 54 concerns the restoration of Israel and the renewal of the covenant between Israel and YHWH. Isa 54 holds out the promise of Israel's restoration from exile and destruction: this will be a day when Israel will "shout for joy" (54.1), "enlarge the place" of their tent

argues that both the messianic banquet (Isa 25.6-8; 49.9-10; 65.13; 55.1-3) and the banquet of wisdom (Prov 9.1-6; Sir. 24.19-22) lie behind John 6.

⁶¹ Swancutt, "Hunger, 234ff. So also Brunson, Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John, 158-159.

⁶² See Exod 15.24; 16.2,7-9,12; 17.3; Num 14.2,36; 16.41; 17.5. So Beasley-Murray, John, 96 and Schnackenburg, St. John II, 49.

⁶³ J.H. Bernard, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John I, Edinburgh 1928, 21942, 204, suggests that LXX 38.3 may be alluded to in John 6.44. In the new covenant/restoration chapter Jer 38 (MT: 31), YHWH's "drawing" Israel "with compassion" (ἐἴλκυσά σε εἰς οἰκτίρημα) is related to his "rebuilding" (v.4) and "gathering" (συνάγω) Israel (v.10). See also A. Feuillet, Les thèmes bibliques majeures du discours sur le pain de vie, in: *Études johannique* (Museum Lessianum Section biblique, 4), Bruges 1962, 122-24 and Brown, *John*, 1.271.

⁶⁴ See Menken, Quotations, 66-77 and the bibliography cited there.

(v.2), a day when their descendents will “possess the nations”, “resettled the desolate cities” (v.3), and a day when Israel will no longer be “put to shame” or “feel humiliated” (v.4). Though God had, for a brief moment, “abandoned” Israel in his “wrath” (vv.7-8), a clear reference to the exile, God will now “have mercy on you”⁶⁵ with “great compassion” (v.7), a clear reference to the return from exile. “Afflicted” Israel shall now be comforted (v.11) and “all your sons will be taught of God and your children will be with/in great peace” (πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς σου διδασκτοὺς θεοῦ καὶ ἐν πολλῇ εἰρήνῃ τὰ τέκνα σου, v.13). In light of this background, Jesus’ statement in 6.45c takes on great significance: after quoting Isa 54.13a, Jesus says: πᾶς ὁ ἀκούσας παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μαθὼν ἔρχεται πρὸς ἐμέ. The implication is that the restoration day of Isa 54 is here; God is “teaching” (διδασκτός, Isa 54.13a) Israel through the Messiah’s words and deeds and the one who *hears* (αἰκouvω) his teaching and *learns* (μανθωνω) from God through him “is coming to me” (ἔρχεται πρὸς ἐμέ, John 6.45c). Apparently, those who do not “come” to Jesus by the Father’s “drawing” (6.44) will not experience the second exodus deliverance.

Some interpreters understand John’s apparent redaction of this Isaiah quote (John has left out τοὺς υἱοὺς σου in Isa 54.13a but kept the πάντας) as supporting the so-called Johannine universalism: namely, salvation is not only for Israel but also for the Gentiles.⁶⁶ Surely John would not deny this. But, the point of John 6.45b is not universalism as such since πᾶς here is qualified by “hearing” and “learning from the Father”: πᾶς ὁ ἀκούσας παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μαθὼν.⁶⁷ Furthermore, the context of John 6, its imagery, setting, Jewish interlocutors and the reenactment of the exodus wilderness wanderings and God’s provision for Israel in that setting, suggest that it is *Israel’s* second exodus/restoration that is in view here.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ The MT has “I will gather you” here, but the LXX reads ἐλεήσω σε. God’s “mercy” in this context is redemptive and restorational.

⁶⁶ *Becker*, Johannes I, 213; *Schnackenburg*, St. John II, 51; *E.D. Freed*, Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 11), Leiden 1965, 19-20; *M.-J. Lagrange*, Évangile selon Saint Jean, Paris ⁸1948, 181. *Schnackenburg’s* comments are representative: “The evangelist quotes freely and adapts the text to his purposes, and so here he avoids the reference to the sons of Israel and leaves πάντες in its universality...” (51).

⁶⁷ *Menken*, Quotations, 75-76, similarly argues: “one should be careful in speaking of ‘universalism’ in the Fourth Gospel: according to John, only those whom the Father gives to Jesus, whom the Father draws, come to belief in Jesus (6:37,39,44,65; 10:29; 17:2,6,9,24; 18:9). ‘All’ in the quotation of 6:45 takes up ‘no one’ (6:44), which is restricted by a conditional clause, and it is in turn taken up by ‘everyone’ (6:45b), which is restricted by two participles with conditional meaning”.

⁶⁸ The motif of a second exodus in the Fourth Gospel may be employed by means of approaching it by reference to Exodus-Deuteronomy or by going through Second Isaiah. As

Restoration of the Twelve Tribes of Israel

It appears that John has specifically emphasized the “gathering...that nothing may be lost” in 6.12 when compared with the synoptic tradition: “only in John is it introduced with a separate command by Jesus”.⁶⁹ Schnackenburg similarly notes: “what in the Synoptics simply confirms the miracle (Mk 6:43 par; cf. Mk 8:8 par) becomes in John a considered action...”.⁷⁰ The emphasis placed on the “gathering” along with the mention of “twelve baskets” has led many to see some kind of symbolism going here. Some mention that the gathering of the *twelve* baskets represents the gathering of eschatological Israel⁷¹ or simply the gathering of “a new people of God”.⁷² Many however argue that the “twelve” in 6.13 suggests the eschatologically restored twelve tribes of Israel as represented by the disciples and thus the gathering here is the gathering of the Church.⁷³ Schnackenburg and Lindars deny any figurative value to the “twelve” baskets in 6.13.⁷⁴

But, there is in fact a great deal that points in the direction of viewing 6.12-13 as a symbolic reference to the restoration of the twelve tribes of Israel. The restoration of the twelve tribes was certainly one of the most cherished hopes of Jews from the OT prophets to the late Second Temple period. Sanders notes that “the expectation of the reassembly of Israel was so widespread, and the memory of the twelve tribes remained so acute, that ‘*twelve*’ would necessarily mean ‘*restoration*’”.⁷⁵ J. Meier, in his work that primarily concerns the historical Jesus, argues that Jesus’ calling and sending of *twelve* disciples was intended to be a prophetic

Brunson points out (Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John, 155), “the original exodus story was taken up and reinterpreted in the Prophets as the paradigmatic deliverance that provides the pattern for all subsequent deliverances”. In John 6 it appears that the primary reference point is Exodus but in general “he looks through the lenses of the Prophets and therefore interprets the first exodus in relation to the eschatological new exodus” (155). For a similar phenomenon present in the “Lukan Travel Narrative”, see A. Denaux, *Old Testament Models for the Lukan Travel Narrative*, in: C.M. Tuckett, *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, Leuven 1997. Denaux, in his review of Lukan studies that describe Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem as a new exodus, shows that scholars make this link “either with reference to Exodus-Deuteronomy or with reference to Deutero-Isaiah” (291).

⁶⁹ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 93.

⁷⁰ Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 2.18.

⁷¹ Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, 163; U. Schnelle, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes* (ThHK, 4), Leipzig 1998, 116-117; Carson, *John*, 271.

⁷² B. Olsson, *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2:1-11 and 4:1-42* (CBNTS, 6), Lund 1974, 246.

⁷³ Wengst, *Johannesevangelium I*, 221-222; J. Blank, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes 4/1a* (Geistliche Schriftlesung), Düsseldorf 1981, 342-343; Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 95-98; Barrett, *St John*, 231.

⁷⁴ Schnackenburg, *St. John I*, 18; Lindars, *John*, 243.

⁷⁵ E.P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, London 1985, 98. Emphasis original.

symbol of the re-gathering of the twelve tribes of Israel.⁷⁶ Assigning such a symbolic value to “the twelve” in John 6.13 (cf. v.71) as referring to John’s concern for the restoration of true Israel is consistent with the findings of J.A. Steiger’s extensive study of the intertextual echoes behind Jesus’ designation of Nathanael in John 1.47: ἵδε ἀληθῶς Ἰσραηλίτης ἐν ᾧ δόλος οὐκ ἔστιν. On the basis of verbal and conceptual parallels between John 1.45-51 and Zeph 3.13ff., Steiger persuasively argues that Nathanael is “der Vertreter des Restes Israels”.⁷⁷ His basic thesis is as follows:

Darin ist Nathanael wahrhaft Israelit, dass in ihm die von den Propheten bezeugte und verheissene endzeitliche Rettung des Volkes Gottes exemplarisch und damit proleptisch (und deswegen defektiv) in Erfüllung geht. Nathanael ist wahrhaft Israelit dergestalt, dass er auf die eschatologische Existenz des Volkes Gottes und auf die Errettung durch Jahweh hinweist und eine ganze Reihe von Prophetentexten lesen und in eschatologischem Kontext erneut verstehen lehrt.⁷⁸

It is quite significant that a direct mention of the *twelve* disciples comes at the very end of the discourse (John 6.67) and directly after “many of his disciples” left Jesus because they apparently did not believe his words. But his disciples, the twelve, confess faith in Jesus through their representative Peter: they believe that he has the words of life (v.68) and that he is “the holy one of God” (v.69). It is only at this point

that John mentions that Jesus had chosen the Twelve (6.70), in this way identifying them – in contrast to the unbelieving Jews – with the true Israel. It is the reconstituted twelve tribes, the new community he is intending on forming, that Jesus will gather and lead out of exile.⁷⁹

A review of the immediate context of 6.12-13 is important to further unpack the symbolism here. The previous scene has Jesus providing for the multitude in a re-enactment of the exodus provision under Moses. This became quite clear since the multitude identified Jesus as the “prophet” in v.14. On the other side of 6.12-13 we have Jesus providing safe passage through the sea for his distressed and endangered disciples recalling YHWH’S provision of safe passage through the Red Sea for Israel. At least on this contextual level, there is support for reading 6.12-13 as

⁷⁶ J. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus III*, New York 2001, 148-163. See also A.S. Geysler, *Some Salient New Testament Passages on the Restoration of the Twelve Tribes of Israel*, in: J. Lambrecht, *L'Apocalypse johannique et l'Apocalyptique dans le Nouveau Testament* (BETL, LIII), Leuven 1980), 305-310.

⁷⁷ J.A. Steiger, *Nathanael – ein Israelite, an dem kein Falsch ist: Das hermeneutische Phänomen der Intertestamentarizität aufgezeigt an Joh 1,45-51*, *BTZ* 9 (1992), 53.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁷⁹ Brunson, *Psalm 118 in the Gospel of John*, 164.

signifying that Jesus rescues (or gathers) from perishing (ἀπόλλυμι, cf. 3.16; 11.50) those who believe in him. This reading is certainly consistent with the exodus symbolism in John six as a whole.

Conclusions

Our survey of second exodus imagery in Joh 6 suggests the following conclusions. (1) The consistent and strategic use of exodus-Moses echoes suggests that the first exodus provided John with elements that were important in his presentation of Jesus. As Prophetic restoration texts and other Jewish works used the exodus as a paradigm for the hope of eschatological restoration, so also it appears John likewise made use of elements from this paradigmatic event (and events surrounding) the first great divine deliverance of Israel. (2) Imagery such as the expected “prophet like Moses”, (Joh 6.14), sign-miracles such as providing bread for the multitude (6.5-11), the crossing of the sea (6.16-21), Jesus’ identification with *true* manna that brings eternal life, as opposed to the manna in the wilderness of Sinai (6.31-37, 41, 48-50-51), various scripture citations and allusions (6.31, 44-45), and the symbolic “gathering” of fragments into twelve baskets (6.12-13), all combine in this chapter to show that the day of restoration is here and that Jesus the Messiah, the prophet like Moses *par excellence*, is now leading a second exodus restoration that will lead to eternal life and the restoration of a new community.