God, fearing one another and accepting glory from one another rather than from God alone.

In 5:45-47 Jesus rounds out his argument, coming full circle and picturing a courtroom different from the one envisioned by his opponents. Instead of being the defendant, prosecuted by Moses, Jesus occupies the judge's seat given to him by his Father (5:22). His opponents find themselves in the defendant's position, prosecuted by Moses, the traditional authority of the law. In v. 46 Jesus underscores his relationship with Moses with another parallelism that centers on Jesus' identity (matching portions are emphasized):

A. For if **you would have believed in** Moses,
  B. **You would have believed in** *me.*
  B'. For about *me*
A'. That one wrote.

The combination of literary features in this verse emphasizes the importance of Jesus' comment: he is not in competition with Moses, but rather his work is in continuity with God's work begun at creation and described by this prophet (Harstine, 117–18).

The final line of the speech in 5:47 drives his point home:

A'. Now if that one's writings (*grammasin*) you are not **believing**,
  B". how in *my words* (*rhēmasin*) will you **believe**?

As in 2:22, Jesus' words are equivalent to Scripture; to believe in Scripture is also to believe in Jesus' words. Indeed, the Greek highlights this point further by switching from *logos* (word) to *rhēma* in 5:47, creating assonance and consonance that blend writings (or Scripture) with his words: *grammasin, rhēmasin.* In John 6, Jesus continues using *rhēma* to describe his words after reenacting Moses' provision of manna in the wilderness. Again figuring Moses' work as a precursor to the Father's work in himself (3:14), Jesus' words are "spirit and life" (6:63, 68).

The Second Passover: Bread in Galilee (6:1–7:1)

After Jesus' dramatic second trip to Jerusalem, he returns again to Galilee, making his third appearance there. The location in Galilee recalls Jesus' two previous experiences with the Galileans in John 2 and 4. Jesus' acceptance by the crowds is contrasted with Jesus' lack of trust in their belief, and the disciples, too, are left in a state of some confusion in 2:18-22, needing help to understand Jesus' words (cf. 4:31-38). In John 6, this confusion comes

to a head as both the disciples and a large crowd are challenged by Jesus' "hard word" (*sklēros . . . ho logos*, 6:60). Although most scholars focus on the possibility of Eucharistic overtones in this passage, Jan Heilmann argues that the passage is about Jesus' election of the Twelve (2018, 496). Heilmann's thesis is supported by the fact that episodes with the disciples are interspersed throughout John 6 (vv. 5-13, 16-21, 60-71). Jesus' final statement in 6:70 is the climax: "Have not I myself chosen you, the Twelve?"

In this reading, the crowd and the Jews act as foils for the disciples who are undergoing an elaborate "test" (*peirazō*) Jesus initiates in 6:5-6 when he lifts his eyes and notices the large crowd spread out before him on the mountain. The test not only challenges the disciples' belief that Jesus can again make miraculous provision (2:1-11) but also if they understand his words from 4:31-38 that the fields are ripe for a harvest. Jesus' harvest is not the large crowd but the Twelve, who endure the testing by following Jesus' twisting metaphors in 6:25-59. Privileged also to Jesus' theophanic crossing of the sea in 6:16-21, these disciples confess through Peter, "we have believed and have known that you are the Holy One of God" who has "the words of life" (6:68-69). This collection includes eleven given to him by the Father and one devil, who completes the Twelve (6:70-71) but who is also the "son of the destruction" (17:12).

A. 6:1-15: Eating at the Mountain

John 6:1-4 contains the first mention of the Sea of Galilee in the Gospel of John (cf. 21:1, 7). Jesus' continued curing of "the ill" (6:2; cf. 5:3, 7) has attracted a "large crowd" who follows him and his disciples "to the mountain" (6:3; cf. 4:20-21). In 6:4 we learn that "Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near." This phrase is a combination of 2:13 and 5:1, bringing Jesus' first two Jerusalem experiences to bear in Galilee. While Jesus' absence from Jerusalem for this festival is surprising at first, it furthers motifs from his conversation with the Samaritan woman in 4:20-26 that worship is not about "the mountain" or "the place" but rather about recognizing and receiving God's glory when he comes.

The mountain location in John 6 is also significant because it contributes to the extended comparison between this Passover and the events surrounding the first Passover, undergirding the misunderstandings that happen in 6:25-59. This rhetorical move is called a *synkrisis* (Theon, *Prog.* 112; Quintilian, *Inst.* 5.10.86–93; *Rhet. Her.* 1.6.10; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.9.38–41). John uses *synkrisis* to compare Jesus to events and figures from the OT, always showing his superiority (e.g., John 1:50-51; 3:13-14; 4:12; 6:58; 8:53; Myers 2012, 47–49). According to John's Gospel, OT figures and events are

themselves signifiers that, when rightly understood, point to Jesus, whose existence as the Word precedes them all (1:1). As Jesus said in 5:45-47, Moses wrote about him.

The feeding episode is an inclusio with a parallelism in the middle that emphasizes Jesus' interaction with his disciples. The structure can be divided as follows:

A. vv. 1-4, A crowd follows Jesus to the mountain because of signs
  B. vv. 5-6, Jesus looks up, sees the crowd, and initiates a test
    C. vv. 7-9, The disciples respond
  B'. vv. 10-12, Jesus feeds the crowd
    C'. v. 13, The disciples harvest the abundance
A'. vv. 14-15, A crowd has seen signs and Jesus departs for the mountain

Unlike the Synoptic accounts, Jesus does not express emotion at the sight of the large crowd following him; instead, the crowd's presence prompts the test for the disciples sitting with Jesus on the mountain. Jesus' "lifting his eyes" in 6:5 repeats from his parable in 4:35 when Jesus told the disciples, "Do not you yourselves say, 'Still there are four months and the harvest comes'? *Look!* I am saying to you, *lift your eyes and see the fields that are white for harvest!*" The reference to "barley loaves" in 6:9 and 13 reinforces this connection, since barley turns a white color when ready to harvest (Theophrastus, *Caus. plant.* 3.21.3; Plutarch, *Nat. Q.* 15; *Mor.* 915d; *p. Pe'ah* 2:5; cf. Keener 2003, 625). Its use in the five loaves demonstrates that it is already time for a harvest (cf. the Samaritan woman's "five" husbands, 4:18). In 6:13 the disciples have their own harvest when they "gather together" (*synagō*, 4:36) the abundance (*perisseuō*, 6:12-13), for which they did not work (cf. 6:26-27). They do not yet realize that they are in the process of being harvested by Jesus as well.

The crowd wants to make (*poiēsōsin*) Jesus king in response to his signs (6:15). The ability to cure and to provide food are two qualities associated with ideal kings in the ancient Mediterranean world. Ancients constructed ideal kings as special men who had a unique connection to the divine and were able to adjudicate heavenly justice upon earth. More than legal justice, ideal kings provided complete justice and order. All those who demonstrated loyalty (or love) to the king were given protection and provision in return—this was how a king showed his (and his god's) love for the faithful people (J. Smith, 86–89, 170–72). Jesus' signs in the Gospel of John resonate with this construction: he represents God's perspective in words and deeds (2:13-22; 5:19-20), his judgment is just (5:30), he cures the ill (4:46-54;

5:1-9; 6:2), he provides drink and food (2:1-11; 6:5-13), and he protects his own (10:1-18).

Jesus' provision of manna around the time of Passover places him in continuity with the other great prophet-king of Israel's past: Moses. In Jesus, the crowd believes it has discovered "the prophet who is coming into the world" (6:14), the one who was promised by Moses to follow in his footsteps. This prophet should be heard and obeyed (*akousesthe*), while other false prophets are to be rejected (Deut 18:15-22). Even in Deuteronomy the people fear not recognizing the prophet promised to them. They are told to test the prophet's words based on truthfulness: if his words come true, he is from God. In John 6, the crowd recognizes Jesus as a prophet, but they do not "hear" Jesus' words because he is more than a prophet (6:25-40). While Jesus is similar to Moses, the crowd's chronology is all wrong: Jesus does not follow and imitate Moses, but Moses communicated the Word told to him, and when Moses obeyed God, he followed this Word (John 1:15, 30; 8:56; 12:41; cf. Philo, *Vit. Mos.* 1.155–62). By focusing on the human imitator, this crowd misses the full vision of the divine before them. In a hint at the theophany that is to come, John describes Jesus' solo time upon the mountain, writing that "he went up again into the mountain, himself only (*monos*)." The adjective *monos* was used in 5:44 to describe God's glory in a reference to the *Shema* (Deut 6:4-5). That Jesus, too, can be described in similar terms reinforces his identity as God's glory made flesh while also emphasizing a key point of conflict in the narrative: his unique relationship with God, his Father.

B. 6:16-24: Sea Crossings

The next episode records two sea crossings, one begun by the disciples alone but during which they are joined by Jesus (vv. 16-21), and one the following day by the crowd (vv. 22-24). Jesus' miraculous stroll upon the turbulent waters of the Sea of Galilee could be compared to Moses' crossing of the Red Sea, which continues the exodus themes of John 6 (Brown 1966, 255–56). This is also, however, a theophanic scene: that is, one in which the divine appears. The sea, or any large body of water, was considered an emblem of chaos in the ancient world; it was unstable, unfathomable, and uncontrollable for any mortal, often leading one into danger and death (Job 9:8; Ps 77:16-20; 78:11; see Brant 2011, 118). Thus, in Genesis, God's Spirit roams above the chaotic waters before God speaks order and life into existence. It is God's order, and God's control, that tames the chaotic waters. In

the same way, the disciples suffer when they depart from their Lord in John 6:16 and head out, alone, into the waters.

Rather than a spirit, it is a "great wind" (*anemou megalou*) that begins "stirring up" the waters around them in the dark (6:17-18). Some distance from the shore, the disciples are at the mercy of the chaotic darkness; it is in this moment that they "saw Jesus walking upon the sea" coming "near" their boat. In a reenactment of the Light's victory over primordial chaos, Jesus strides upon the waters to meet his lost disciples, even though they left without him! Recognizing the theophanic scene before them, the disciples do not fear the waters, but they fear Jesus, who overcomes the darkness (cf. 1:5; 8:12). Jesus speaks his second "I am" statement in 6:20, this time also incorporating the command to "stop fearing!" that resonates with angelic and divine appearances as well as prophetic utterances from the OT (Gen 15:1; 21:17; Deut 1:21; 20:3; Isa 35:4; 40:9; cf. Tob 12:17). The disciples, then, "want" to take him into their boat, but Jesus has other plans. In a moment that parallels the formation of earth from the waters in Gen 1:9-10, the disciples' boat suddenly "happens upon the earth" as though the earth rose from the deep to meet them. Just as God "gathered together" (*synagagō*, Gen 1:9) the waters and the sky in Genesis to make room for life, Jesus repeats such a gathering in John 6, showing that his harvest still leads to life (cf. *synagagō*, John 4:35-36; 6:13).

The second crossing comes the following day when the crowd arrives to find that Jesus and his disciples have left. Jesus' departure from the crowd suggests that the narrative is still focused on the disciples' ongoing test rather than the fate of the crowd (6:5-6). The crowd realizes something miraculous has again happened, however, since Jesus was not with his disciples when they left and he did not have access to another boat for the journey (6:22). When another "small boat" comes near their location "at the place where they ate the bread after the Lord gave thanks," they also "embarked" for Capernaum "seeking Jesus" (6:23-24). The crowd's crossing is ambiguous. Their response to go to Jesus is positive, since he is the source of life (5:40), yet the association with the feeding miracle again reminds us of their misunderstanding of Jesus in 6:14-15. Their "seeking" of Jesus continues their behavior from 6:14 when they were "about to come and to seize" Jesus in order to "make" him king. Jesus, however, will not be seized by anyone else's agenda other than his Father's (2:4; 4:34; 5:30). When the crowd finally finds Jesus in 6:25-40, Jesus explains that "one coming" to him must accept the Father's will rather than what they may "want" (*thelō*; cf. 6:11, 21, 67; cf. 5:6, 35, 40; 7:17, etc.). What we want is simply too meager compared to what the Father gives.

C. 6:25-59: Teaching in Capernaum

Although we are not told until 6:59, the crowd eventually finds Jesus in a synagogue in Capernaum, where they and the Jews engage Jesus in a lengthy conversation. This is Jesus' only appearance teaching in a synagogue in John's Gospel. Craig Koester argues that the synagogue location explains the unique form of Jesus' rhetoric in John 6; his exposition of biblical texts may reflect actual synagogue practices of his day (2017, 68–72; cf. Luke 4:14-30). Peder Borgen's monumental study also shows extensive similarities between Jesus' exposition in John 6 and practices outlined by Philo of Alexandria.

The synagogues were important religious and social locations for Jews in the ancient Mediterranean world, particularly after the Babylonian exile (even if they existed in some form prior to this time), which left most Jews dispersed from Palestine. As Erich Gruen shows, Jews continued worshiping and learning in these synagogues, which were diverse as well as pervasive "from the Black Sea to North Africa, and from Syria to Italy," even after the temple was rebuilt (105–13). Believing God to be the one Lord of the whole world rather than one bound to a particular physical location, the synagogues did not compete with the temple but preserved Jewish traditions valued by specific communities and also facilitated participation in aspects of Roman culture (113–32). Jesus' time in both the temple and this synagogue in Capernaum resonates with these beliefs of God's ability to manifest glory in any place. The challenge for people remains the ability to recognize that glory. Moreover, continuing the themes of the chapter, Jesus' presence in a place of "gathering together," a *synagogē*, shows him "gathering together" (*synagō*) or harvesting in a place fit for harvest; this is his field (4:35-36). Later in the Gospel, however, Jesus' harvested ones will face opposition in these fields. While Jesus is not forced from the Capernaum synagogue, his "hard" words result in the departure of most of his disciples (6:60-71). The "going out" from Jesus in John 6, therefore, sets the stage for the later expulsions from the synagogue (*aposynagōgos*, 9:22; 12:41; 16:2) in the narrative to come (6:37; 9:34-35).

The synagogue setting also raises the possibility that Jesus is teaching on the Sabbath, thus continuing his working on this holy day from John 5 (cf. Mark 1:21; Luke 4:14-16). In John 5, the Gospel audience is not told that it was the Sabbath until after Jesus cures the man; in the same way, the Gospel audience does not learn of Jesus' location in the synagogue after his teaching is complete in 6:59. In John 7, Jesus' Sabbath behavior continues to be the subject of debate, especially his cure of the man in 5:1-9, which Jesus mentions explicitly in 7:19-24. Jesus also reportedly teaches "on the great day" of the Festival of Tabernacles in 7:37, perhaps also a Sabbath day

(cf. 9:14). He will then follow this teaching with another Sabbath cure in 9:1-7. If John 6 is set on a Sabbath day, even implicitly, it participates in a larger section of the Gospel devoted to Jesus' work on this holy day: "My Father until now is working and I myself also am working" (5:17).

Jesus' discourse in 6:25-59 contains a number of literary structures. Its intricacy is evidenced by the variety of chiasms and parallelisms found within it by interpreters. As Jo-Ann Brant shows, Jesus repeats words throughout his speech, building parallelisms that create meaning, as long as one can follow all the twists and turns (2011, 120; cf. Brown 1966, 288–89). Heilmann argues that the key to understanding Jesus' speech is knowing the "basic conceptual metaphor" Jesus uses: namely, that when Jesus says "whoever *eats* of the living bread that came down from heaven will live forever" he means, "whoever receives the incarnated word and believes in it will live forever" (487). Jesus uses a variety of metaphors to help clarify what he means by "food" (*brōsis*, 6:27, 55; cf. 4:32; 6:13), "eternal life," and "seeking" to create symbolic networks that one must follow to their end rather than being scandalized by the literal definitions of Jesus' words and abandoning him midway. "Food that remains for eternal life," for example, is linked to bread, true bread, bread from heaven, manna, bread of life, bread descending from heaven, the one descending from heaven, flesh, and words. As we will see, it is when the crowd, the Jews, and the disciples get stuck on their own expectations that they stumble: the crowd is hung up on literal food, wanting more literal "manna" (6:25-40), the Jews think Jesus is lying about his origins and is trying to get people to commit cannibalism (6:41-58), and many of Jesus' disciples are likewise "scandalized" by Jesus' teaching (6:60-66). Only those who remain with Jesus the whole way through the teaching can come to confess that Jesus "has the words of eternal life" (6:69).

John 6:25-59 breaks into two major portions: 6:25-40 in which Jesus speaks with the crowd, and 6:41-59 where Jesus speaks specifically to the Jews who also seem to have been present for 6:25-40 at the synagogue (v. 59). The topics covered in these sections create a larger chiasm in vv. 25-51, leading to a climax in vv. 52-58, where Jesus blends the metaphors of food and resurrection.

A. 6:25-35, Bread and Drink
  B. 6:36-40, Resurrection on the Last Day
  B'. 6:41-47, Resurrection on the Last Day
A'. 6:48-51, Bread and Drink
A/B. Climax: 6:52–59 Bread, Drink, and Resurrection