

The Use of "Scripture" in the Gospel of John

INTRODUCTION

The question of the degree to which the Fourth Gospel is based on the Old Testament is neither new nor original. In addition to several studies that treat the subject explicitly,¹ there is a host of contributions dealing with aspects of our subject, like the role of "fulfillment" in the Gospel of John² or the importance of individual books or traditions from the Old Testament for the Gospel of John.³ D. Moody Smith, who places the subject along the wider horizon of "The Use of the Old Testament in the New,"⁴ has dealt with a number of aspects of the topic.

A careful reading of the literature on our theme and a verification of the results of previous research, made on the basis of the text of John itself, lead to some observations that at first sight seem to be independent of one another but reveal themselves as coherent when we look closer. A first observation we can make is that in the Gospel of John we have to distinguish between explicit quotations of the Old Testament and allusions to it. The fact that there is no consensus on the actual number of explicit quotations of the Old Testament in John⁵ has to do with a second observation: Even if we seem to be dealing with an explicit quotation from the Old Testament, often it cannot be decided with certainty which text from the Old Testament is actually quoted.⁶ A third observation is that there is as yet no consensus regarding whether John quotes from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, which he or his source translates, or from the Greek text of the Old Testament (which we used to call the Septuagint), if not from some targumic tradition.⁷ Our fourth observation consists in the fact that the texts of the Old Testament to which John refers sometimes seem to form patterns. One famous example is the way that John uses the book of Isaiah in chapters one and twelve of his Gospel.⁸ More examples can be given easily.⁹

If we take all these observations together, there seems to be at hand one possible explanation: John is less interested in the "fulfillment" of individual passages of the Old Testament in Jesus than in the "fulfillment" of "scripture" as such. With this thesis we have already formulated our working hypothesis. It is not new, as such,

but has been stated already by students of the Fourth Gospel like C. H. Dodd,¹⁰ C. K. Barrett,¹¹ R. Morgan,¹² C.F.D. Moule,¹³ J. Luzarraga,¹⁴ M. Wilcox,¹⁵ and, last but not least, D. Moody Smith himself.¹⁶

The purpose of this modest contribution consists in showing that the way John uses the expression "scripture" (γραφῆ, γραφά) or "writing" (γραφεύ) confirms our working hypothesis. Dealing with our subject in this way has two advantages: We can narrow our research to a limited number of texts, and we tread on fresh ground, since this particular aspect of John's use of "scripture" has hardly been dealt with hitherto.¹⁷

We shall include in our investigation three texts where the fourth evangelist uses the formula "the prophet Isaiah said" (John 1:23; 12:39, 41) or "to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet Isaiah" (12:38). These formulas seem to be equivalent with the expressions using the terms "scripture" or "writing." We shall exclude from our study those instances where John speaks of "writing" in the context of the titulus (John 19:19–22), because they seem to be irrelevant for the question of Holy Scripture.

JOHN'S USE OF "SCRIPTURE" AND "WRITING"

There are twelve instances where John uses the word γραφή in the course of his Gospel, and in all of them the meaning is "Holy Scripture."¹⁸ When he speaks of "writing" (21 instances, plus John 8:8, in the section about the adulterous woman, which we omit), he refers almost exclusively to Holy Writ with two exceptions: the passage about the titulus (John 19:19–22) and some passages about the writing down of the Jesus tradition, proper to the Fourth Gospel (John 20:30–31; 21:24–25). Once John uses the word γραμμά (pl.) for everything that has been written, or "reading and writing," or, more concretely, for the Holy Scripture of Israel, which at the same time served as the schoolbook for young Israelites (John 7:15). We shall include this text also in our considerations. We may add John 7:52, where Nicodemus is admonished to "search [the scriptures]" (cf. 5:39).

Clear References to Individual Texts

There are about nine instances in the Gospel of John where a reference to "scripture" or to a prophet can more or less clearly be identified. We find them in John 1:23; 2:17; 6:45; 10:34; 12:38; 12:39–41; 13:18; 19:24; and 19:37.¹⁹

In John 2:17 the formula is simply "it is written" (γεγραμμένον ἔστιν). The quotation is taken from Ps. 68:10 (LXX), with the only difference being that the aorist, κατέφαγεν με ("consumed me"), has been transformed into the present, καταφαγεται με ("consumes me"). What is important for our subject is the fact that John uses a psalm verse as authoritative, as "scripture." Evidently, for him the Book of Psalms already belongs to the canon of Holy Writings of Israel. He joins here a tradition that can be traced back to the Book of Ben Sira, where the

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Law, the prophecies, and the wisdom of the elders are placed beside one another (Sir. 39:1), and where these three elements together seem to form the canon of the sacred books of Israel (Sir. Pr.).²⁰ This development is also reflected in Luke 24:44, where Christ argues for his passion and his resurrection as being foretold in the Law, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms.

The quotation in John 6:45, "And they shall all be taught by God," seems to be taken from Isa. 54:13 (LXX). The text may allude as well to Jer. 31[38]:31–34 (LXX), but more for the content than for the wording. The Johannine introduction is unique in the New Testament: "It is written in the prophets." Next to our text comes Acts 7:42, "As it is written in the book of the prophets." Evidently in both instances the Prophets are considered to be part of scripture and derive their authoritative power from it, even as they refer to a particular passage from a single prophet. Direct translation of Isa. 54:13 from the Hebrew is improbable.²¹

Likewise, Christ's reference to scripture in John 10:34 can be located with sufficient clarity: "I said, you are gods" is taken from Ps. 81:6 (LXX). Direct translation from the Hebrew can be excluded as a possibility, since John does not use the aorist form, ἔγραψα ("I said"), outside our text.²² The introduction in John 10:34 sounds unusual for a quotation taken from a psalm: "Is it not written in your law?" It supposes a usage where the "law" is still synonymous with "scripture." This terminology is attested also elsewhere (see John 15:25).²³ It shows that the word taken from the book of Psalms has its authority, not from this individual book, but from scripture as such.

A similar usage of a quotation from the Psalms is found in John 13:18. Here it is qualified as a quotation from "scripture," which had to be fulfilled. The idea of "fulfillment" of scripture occurs first in John 12:38 in the context of Jesus' passion and resurrection, as has often been noted.²⁴ Both the fact that Jesus had to die for his own, as well as many details of his passion, have been announced in scripture and prove to be part of God's plan of salvation. In John 13:18 the quotation illustrating the betrayal of Jesus by his very friend is taken from Ps. 41:10 (MT), in a rather free rendering due to the redactional tendencies of John.²⁵

Another element of the passion of Jesus, foretold in the Psalms, is the division of his garments by the soldiers in John 19:24. The quotation is taken verbatim from Ps. 21:19 (LXX). It is again introduced by the formula that speaks of the "fulfillment of scripture." There is strong external and internal evidence for the shorter reading of the introduction: "that scripture might be fulfilled" (instead of "the scripture saying . . .").²⁶ Scripture, as such, had to be fulfilled, and not only this or that individual text. The narrowing of "scripture" to this individual verse seems to be secondary.

The only clear instance where γραφή seems to mean an "individual passage from scripture" is found in John 19:37. In spite of considerable differences in wording, the looking upon the pierced side of Jesus is considered to be foretold by scripture, in this case Zech. 12:10.²⁷ Scripture, as such, is still in the background since

the preceding verse reads: "These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled," with a quotation which cannot be determined with certainty (see below).

In another group of texts, words of the prophet Isaiah are introduced or quoted as such: John 1:23; 12:38; and 12:39–41. In the first case, Isa. 40:3 (LXX) is quoted with some modifications; in the second, Isa. 53:1 (LXX) is quoted literally. Here we find for the first time the idea of "fulfillment" of the prophetic word: We have entered the context of the passion of Jesus in the rejection by his people. In the third text, Isa. 6:10 (LXX) is rendered rather freely.²⁸ In all these instances a prophetic book points toward Jesus or his important witness, the Baptist.

Unclear or Unspecified References

Besides the clear references to Old Testament texts in the Gospel of John, there are about nine instances where we find an unclear or unspecified reference to "scripture."

1. Already in John 6:31 it is not clear whether the reference to "what is written" points to Ps. 77:24 (LXX)²⁹ or to some other text, like Ex. 16:4 or 16:15.³⁰ Even a targumic or midrashic tradition cannot be excluded.³¹

2. The provenance of the word of "scripture" in John 7:37–38 is still more mysterious. The text edition of Nestle-Aland (26th ed.) remarks here laconically, "unde?" ("whence?"), and gives a number of possible reference texts. None of them is convincing.

3. We are on slightly better ground with the origin of Jesus from David and from his city, Bethlehem, in John 7:42. But in any case more than one text is referred to. On the one hand some texts like 2 Sam. 7:12, Ps. 88:4–5 (LXX), and Jer. 23:5 speak about an offspring of David to come in the future; on the other, the origin of the coming ruler of Israel from Bethlehem is announced in Micah 5:1. None of these texts alone is sufficient for basing the origin of the Messiah in "scripture."

4. In John 12:14 the basis of the quotation from "what is written" seems to be Zechariah 9:9,³² but there are elements that cannot be explained by this text. Accordingly, the exhortation in the beginning, "Fear not, daughter of Zion," does not come from Zechariah. Commentators refer instead to Isaiah (40:9) or Zephaniah (3:14f.).³³ Only when taken together do these texts render the wording of John 12:14.

5. The second reference to "scripture" in this text (12:16) may refer to the same traditions of the Old Testament as in verse 14 or to some additional ones, like the announcement of the words of the crowd in verse 13 by Ps. 118:25–26 (117:25–26 LXX). In any case, the disciples seem to "remember" more than one scriptural quotation when they reflect on Jesus' entry into Jerusalem in the light of scripture, after his resurrection and "glorification."

6. The word that the enemies of Jesus "hated him without cause" in John 15:25 is quoted as a word of the "law." We have seen that this expression seems to mean "scripture." The text itself could come from Ps. 34:19 (LXX) or 68:5 (LXX), *τίσιν ἡμεῖς καὶ τὸν λαόν σου ἠμίσησαν ὅτι οὐκ ἔμελλεν* ("those who hate

me without cause").³⁴ In both cases the participle has been transformed into the verb of a phrase. Jesus appears as the Suffering Just One of the Psalms. The Jews who persecuted him should have known that the Psalms, as part of the "law," speak of him, and they should have believed in him.

7. Even the work of the traitor is considered by John as announced in scripture. We have seen this in the detail of the common meal of Jesus and his former friend, in John 13:18 (see above). The reference in John 17:12 is less clear. Possibly this verse refers to the quotation in 13:18. All other texts given as parallels are less convincing (2 Sam. 12:5; Isa. 57:4; Prov. 24:22a [LXX]), since they do not speak of an individual person as "son" or "child" of "death" or "perdition."³⁵

8. Another example of an unclear reference is the word of the dying Jesus: "I thirst" (John 19:28). The expression by which it is introduced is unique in the New Testament: *ἵνα τελευθῇ ἡ γράφῃ* ("in order that the scripture might be accomplished"). It may go beyond the usual formula, *ἵνα ἡ γράφῃ πληρωθῇ* ("in order to fulfill the scripture"), which we found in 13:18, 17:12, or 19:24 (see also 19:36), and express a "fulfillment" of scripture to the end.³⁶ But it remains uncertain which particular text of the Old Testament is referred to. Commentators generally think of psalms like Ps. 68:22 (LXX) (because of the context: the thirst of Jesus is quenched by vinegar)³⁷ or 62:2 (LXX),³⁸ but also Ps. 41:3 (LXX) would be possible, given the importance of this psalm for the Gospel of John.³⁹ In none of these references is the first person singular used. Thus, the quotation remains imprecise and ambiguous.

9. The same holds true in the last Johannine text where the "fulfillment" of scripture is affirmed: John 19:36. The piercing of the side of Jesus, instead of the breaking of his legs, is found in scripture. But there are two possible traditions to which the text could refer. The widely accepted view is that the text speaks of the paschal lamb, of which (according to Ex. 12:10, 46 and Num. 9:12) no bone should be broken. The fact that John seems to parallel the death of Jesus to the death of the paschal lambs on the eve of Passover speaks in favor of this opinion: compare the references in 18:28 and 19:14 to the eating of the paschal lamb and the time of the condemnation of Jesus, the traditional time of the slaughtering of the paschal lambs. On the other side, the quotation of John 19:36 could also come from Ps. 33:21 (LXX). There the context is God's care for the Suffering Just One: not one of his bones will be broken. The use of the third person singular speaks in favor of this suggestion: the context is slightly less convincing. So here also a final decision as to which scriptural tradition the Johannine text refers remains difficult, if not impossible.⁴⁰

References to Moses or the Law in General

In two cases the Fourth Gospel refers to Moses or the law in general as testimony of "scripture" for Jesus. John 5:46 (note v. 47) supposes that Moses "wrote about" Jesus, without any specific scriptural reference. This Johannine text is

particularly interesting because it shows clearly that the witness of scripture for Jesus seems to be, for John, independent from this or that particular passage. We shall come back to this observation when we deal with John 5:39 in the following section (see below).

In John 8:17 Jesus bases his claim to be the one sent by God on a principle of the "law," according to which the testimony of two witnesses has to be accepted. We find this quotation in Num. 35:30 and Deut. 17:6; 19:15. The individual passage of the Old Testament seems to be subordinate to the testimony of scripture, as such, to Jesus and his claims. This fits perfectly well with the results we have obtained to this point.

References to the Whole of Scripture

A number of passages, where no particular part or text of scripture is referred to, confirm how much, for John, the whole of scripture points to Jesus. The first example of this kind of witness is found in John 1:45. Philip says to Nathanael, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." It is not clear which christological title is meant by this statement.⁴¹ Earlier Andrew had said to Peter, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed)" (v. 41). Later Nathanael will exclaim, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (v. 49). So the confession of Philip seems to express the christological faith of the Johannine community, as later expressed by Martha (11:27) or the author himself (20:31). As such, it is based in scripture.

In two instances John sees the resurrection of Jesus as announced by scripture. According to John 2:22 the disciples understood only after the resurrection of Christ the witness of scripture about his future resurrection. It is unclear which particular passage could have been referred to. One possible solution to this question could be that John knew the tradition of 1 Cor. 15:4, without caring too much about its detailed basis in scripture. This impression is supported by the second text that bases the resurrection of Jesus from the dead in scripture, John 20:9. The two disciples at the tomb had not yet understood the message of scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead, and so they could not interpret the empty tomb in the right way. Again, no particular passage or text of scripture is referred to. The reader is supposed to grasp the meaning of the reference without further information.⁴²

Again, the whole of scripture is supposed when Jesus tells the Jews unwilling to believe in him, "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf" (John 5:39). The witness of scripture is placed beside the one given by John the Baptist, by the Father, and by the works the Father has given to Jesus (5:31–38). No individual passage of scripture is cited. Scriptures, as such, bear witness for Jesus in his great trial, in his confrontation with "the world."⁴³ When Nicodemus and some other Jewish of-

ficers show beginning belief in Jesus, they are admonished, "Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee" (7:52). The "searching" again refers to scripture.⁴⁴ For "the Jews," the Bible as such makes clear that a prophet does not come from Galilee.

When "the Jews" wonder how Jesus "is not illiterate, although he has not studied" (γράμματα οὐδεν μὴ μεμαθηκός, 7:15), the meaning seems to be that Jesus knows scripture.⁴⁵ This is clear from the context, where Jesus reveals himself as someone teaching with authority. For John, his education comes not from studies but directly from God. Jesus seems to know Scripture, but it is not the source of his divine knowledge.

Scripture as such is meant in a last text, where it is stated that "scripture cannot be annulled" (John 10:35).⁴⁶ The remark refers to the word of scripture, "I said, you are gods" (Ps. 81:6 [LXX]), quoted in 10:34. It serves as basis for an argument a fortiori, proving that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God is justified. Scripture as such has an unquestionable authority. If an individual verse of scripture affirms that all Israelites are gods, then Jesus even more so can claim this dignity for himself.

The Gospel Message in Written Form

John never integrates Christian writings into "scripture," in the sense developed in the preceding sections. In a number of instances, John speaks about the writing down of his message for the benefit of the readers and for their belief, but these references are not directly relevant for the theological question of his concept of "scripture." This perspective is confirmed by the fact that John does not speak of "scripture" (γράφή, γράμμα) where he refers to Christian writings. He only uses the verb γράφειν ("to write") with active or passive forms.

In fact, John 20:30–31 refers to a "book" in which the signs of Jesus are collected and written down for the sake of the belief of the readers. But the change in terminology seems to be significant: John speaks of "this book" (ἐν τῷ βιβλίῳ), instead of the expressions he would use for "scripture." So although the function of the collection of signs of Jesus and of "scripture" is similar, namely to lead to the belief in Christ, their character is different: the Christian witness is going to complement the witness of "scripture" for Jesus, not to make up a part in it. The book to which John refers here is better understood as the whole of his Gospel than as a part of it, like a "signs source." The final text of John does not betray any knowledge of such a document.⁴⁷ The fact that the last miracle of Jesus has been reported in 11:1–44, with the resurrection of Lazarus, speaks for the thesis that the passion, death, and resurrection/exaltation of Jesus form the last of the "signs" of Jesus, in the perspective of the fourth evangelist.⁴⁸

That the whole of the Gospel is meant by the "book of the deeds of Jesus" is evident from the second text at the end of the Fourth Gospel, John 21:24–25. It concludes the report about the apparitions of Jesus in Galilee and sums up the

whole of his activity. More clearly than in 20:30–31, what has been “written” by the evangelist is his “testimony,” which, in a way similar to the one given by scripture, points to Jesus. There remains, however, a stylistic difference that could point to a later time of origin: in the chapters with the great controversies between Jesus and “the Jews” (John 5–10), the “witness” is about Jesus; in John 21:24 it is about “these things” (the words and deeds of Jesus).⁴⁹ The interest shifts from the person of Jesus to details of his life, death, and resurrection. An apologetic intention seems to manifest itself (note the same intention in John 19:35).

THE WORDS OF JESUS AND “SCRIPTURE”

There are no reasons for assuming that the words of Jesus are part of scripture for the fourth evangelist,⁵⁰ but it may be said that they have a comparable authority. After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples remembered the word of Jesus concerning his zeal for the house of the Lord and believed in scripture and in the word Jesus had spoken (John 2:22). A similar parallel between the writings of Moses and the words of Jesus appears in John 5:47. Both are meant to cause the Jews to believe.⁵¹ The Jews themselves see a contrast between the law and the words of Jesus (12:34), but this is because of their lack of belief (12:37). As “remembering” is more than once connected with the word of scripture (see 2:17, 22; 12:16), so it can also be referred to the word of Jesus (2:22; 15:20; 16:4).

Finally, the formula of “fulfillment” can be applied to the word of Jesus.⁵² This occurs twice in the passion narrative. In John 18:9 Jesus refers to a saying in the discourse on the bread of life (6:39) that he would not lose any of those committed to him by the Father. In 18:32 the announcement of Jesus that the Son of Man would be lifted up (see 3:14; 8:28; 12:32) is fulfilled in his deliverance to the pagan authority.

In all these instances the word of Jesus gains an authority comparable with that of “scripture.” The same expressions can be applied to both, but nowhere does his word become formally part of scripture. This development is reserved for later times.⁵³

“SCRIPTURE” AND SCRIPTURE

We have seen so far that the fourth evangelist refers to “scripture” often in a general way: either by unclear or unspecified references, or with a reference to a whole book, or without reference to any particular text at all. The impression one gains is that John is more interested in scripture as such than in particular texts pointing to Jesus. In order to verify this impression, we may now try to classify the explicit references to “scripture” or “writing” in John, according to context and speaker. Roughly, we can distinguish between texts with Jesus as speaker and those with comments by the evangelist. The few exceptions will be dealt with in

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either of the two groups. The references to “scripture” or “writing” with Jesus as speaker are found in two different contexts: the great controversies between Jesus and the “Jews” in chapters 5–12, and the farewell discourse in chapters 13–17. The evangelist’s comments are almost exclusively found in the context of the passion narrative.

Jesus’ References to “Scripture” in the Great Controversies

In the chapters with the great controversies between Jesus and the “Jews” in Jerusalem, we face especially often the problem of identifying the texts to which Jesus refers or alludes. We remember the very general comment of Jesus in John 5:39, “You search the scriptures . . .” Scriptures, as such, are a witness for Jesus. In the context Moses is the one who has written about Jesus (5:46), but no particular passage is quoted.

The words about the flowing water (7:38), in the context of the feast of Tabernacles, could not be located in scripture, and likewise the objection of the “Jews” concerning the origin of the Messiah does not lead to any clear scriptural passage. In the same way the principle of the two or three witnesses (8:17) is found more than once in the Old Testament text.

In the controversy about the divine dignity of Jesus at the feast of Dedication (John 10:34–35), Jesus bases his claims on a precise scriptural quotation, Ps. 81:6 (LXX). The text is taken from the “law,” as a synonym for scripture. The principle is that scripture cannot be annulled, so the part receives its authority from the whole: The individual text has to be acknowledged as an argument, because it is part of scripture. For the rest it has to be seen that Jesus’ reference to Ps. 81:6 (LXX) serves only as a counterargument against Jewish denial of his divine prerogative. It is, therefore, more apologetic than positive. That Jesus is one with the Father cannot be denied, because scripture itself calls the children of Israel “gods.” This is an *argumentum ad hominem*, valid so far as it is accepted by the partner in dialogue.

The controversies in the synagogue of Capernaum differ from the preceding ones in their locale and perhaps even in their time of origin,⁵⁴ but here also the references of Jesus to scripture remain vague, as we have seen previously. Neither the word about the bread from heaven in John 6:31 nor the one about the divine instruction of the people of God in the time to come according to 6:45 could be located with certainty.

Accordingly, the word of Philip to Nathanael, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth” (John 1:45), reads like an introduction to the great controversies. It expresses in a completely generic way the witness of scripture for Jesus.

If we want to sum up this section, we can say that in the great controversies Jesus (and the author) show(s) little concern for the individual passage of scripture as an argument for the claims of Jesus. What counts is scripture as such. If it

is “searched” and understood rightly, it bears witness to Jesus (thus John 5:39). Apparently, for the author the “fulfillment” of scripture in Jesus is so self-evident that individual texts have only a limited importance for the argument. What seems to stand behind this perspective is the controversy between church and synagogue at the end of the first century, where the question was no longer whether some isolated texts could be used as proof texts for or against Jesus, but whether scripture as such found its ultimate meaning in a Christian or in a merely Jewish perspective.⁵⁵ More than in any other section of the Fourth Gospel, therefore, the great controversies betray the characteristic perspective of the fourth evangelist, as it appears in recent research.

Jesus’ References to “Scripture” in the Farewell Discourses

In the farewell discourses of Jesus, the subject of the explicit scriptural quotations is no longer the mission of Jesus but his passion. It is the unjustified hatred of the adversaries of Jesus that has been announced in scripture (John 15:25). We saw that the specific reference is not quite clear, since it leaves open the choice between two different psalms (see above).

In the two remaining instances we find the “fulfillment” formula used more than once by the evangelist in the context of the passion of Jesus (see below). The specific reference to those given to Jesus who were not lost and the one who was lost, in John 17:12, was difficult to locate in scripture, as we saw previously. Still, the whole of scripture seems to stand behind this reference, even if some particular text may have influenced the wording. On the other side, the scene of the common meal of Jesus with the traitor, in John 13:18, leads to a verbal “fulfillment” of scripture insofar as Ps. 40:10 (LXX) is the only text pointing directly to the event reported.

In all these texts, scripture is no longer the common text of Christians and Jews, interpreted for or against the claims of Jesus. It only serves the purpose of introducing the Christian readers into the secret of the passion of Jesus, as announced in the Word of God and rooted in God’s plan of salvation. In addition to more general texts, we have also found an example of a very specific one, announcing a detail of the passion of Jesus. This tendency will increase when we turn, as we now do, to the comments of the evangelist that have recourse to “scripture.”

References of the Evangelist to “Scripture”

Two texts explaining the resurrection of Jesus on the third day as based in scripture seem to frame the original narrative unity of the Gospel of John (without chap. 21): John 2:22 and 20:9. In both cases the evangelist is the speaker. We have seen that the texts referred to remain uncertain. Rather, it was scripture as such, together with the word of Jesus, that had to be fulfilled.

The nearer we come to the passion narrative, the more precise the quotations and references become. In the framework of Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, the evan-

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gelist quotes Zech. 9:9, enlarged and modified by further texts (see above). Here he seems to be dependent on Synoptic tradition, as the parallel in Matt. 21:5 shows. It may be safely assumed that the text from Zechariah forms the basis of the quotation in John, even if John presents the text in a freer way than Matthew.

The remaining references to “scripture” are found in the context of the last hour of Jesus on the cross and the events immediately following his death. This fact alone merits our attention. All the quotations or allusions are introduced directly or indirectly by the “fulfillment” formula (which first occurs in 12:38). The first instance (John 19:24) is particularly interesting. For the division of the garments of Jesus, John quotes Ps. 21:19 (LXX) literally, taking up the allusion in Mark 15:24 (par. Matt. 27:35; Luke 23:34) and transforming it into a “fulfillment” text. A detail of the passion of Jesus has been announced in scripture and “fulfills” it.

The wording is slightly changed in the next instance (John 19:28). “Fulfillment” is here replaced by “accomplishment” (ἵνα τελεωθῇ ἡ γράφη). Grammatically, it may be linked with the preceding events (everything had been accomplished) or with the following one (Jesus thirsts).⁵⁶ In any case, the passion of Jesus comes to its end and completion. The last part of that passion will be the thirst of Jesus, and this too has been preannounced in scripture, as part of God’s plan of salvation. Again, not the identity of Jesus or his mission is attested by “scripture,” but his departure from this world.

Two events immediately after the death of Jesus, both rooted in scripture, round out our results. The opening of the side of Jesus, instead of the breaking of his bones, and the flowing of blood and water from his side belong as well to the “fulfillment” of scripture (John 19:36–37). As we have seen previously, both quotations are difficult to locate in the text of scripture. Their only function seems to be to show Christian readers that this double event did not happen by chance, but brought God’s will to completion. The fact that scripture was fulfilled is again more important than the precise reference to a particular text. Anyhow, the quotation in John 19:37 is relatively clear (Zech. 12:10), and even the choice for John 19:36 is rather limited (the Exodus tradition of Ex. 12:10, 46 [LXX] or Ps. 33:21 [LXX]). We are rather distant from some of the “scripture”-texts of the first half of the Gospel, where the mission of Jesus and his claims as such were the object of the witness of “scripture,” and where a global reference to scriptures as such — to Moses or the prophets — could be enough.

If we look back to the evangelist’s reference to “scripture” in favor of Jesus, we can see that the evangelist uses the testimony of “scripture” for Jesus, not for his mission as such or for his identity as the one sent by God, but for his departure from this world and his future resurrection. From John 12:38 onwards (that is, from the end of the great controversies between Jesus and the “Jews” in Jerusalem), the evangelist uses the “fulfillment” formula. In all instances “scripture” gives witness to details of the passion and death of Jesus. Some quotations are rather precise. In more than one case, parallel Synoptic tradition can be shown.

CONCLUSION

In his usage of "scripture" and the "written" testimony of the sacred books of Israel, the fourth evangelist shows himself to be at the same time original and indebted to early Christian tradition. He depends on tradition mainly in the context of the passion and resurrection of Jesus. The "fulfillment" formula occurs here, where he draws upon tradition. He himself is usually the speaker, not Jesus. The audience seems to be the Christian readers who had to be introduced to the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ.

The chapters of the great controversies between Jesus and "the Jews" convey a different picture. The references to "scripture" or "what is written" range from more or less precise quotations to rather vague ones. Moses, the prophets, or the whole of "the law" or scripture frequently bear witness to Jesus. The author seems to be more interested in the fact of the witness of scripture to Jesus than in the details of it.⁵⁷ Although the author generally seems to use the Septuagint version, he shows considerable freedom in using it. This observation has been confirmed by more recent research on the scripture quotations in John. The impression conveyed is that John is convinced that scripture as a whole bears witness to Jesus. It is of secondary importance how individual passages of scripture contribute to this conviction.

The reason for this sovereign usage of "scripture" in John seems to lie in the fact that the evangelist writes in a period already remote from the first decades of Christianity, a time of growing familiarity with Old Testament "proof texts." In his documentation of controversies between Johannine Christianity and Judaism, he has reached a kind of "meta-level," where the individual proof text no longer counts, but rather, the whole of scripture is at stake: Does it have to be read with "Christian eyes"—and then every line of it would point to Jesus—or could it be read in a Jewish perspective, refusing to believe in a Messiah Jesus? If this interpretation of John is true, then we have another example that Johannine belief in Jesus is in a sense circular: The individual "proof texts" lead to Jesus, but they can only be understood as a whole when the belief to which they should lead is already presupposed. It is the paradox of Johannine belief that we encounter here.

NOTES

1. See Alexander Faure, "Die Alttestamentlichen Zitate im 4. Evangelium und die Quellenscheidungshypothese," ZNW 21 (1922): 99–121; Friedrich Smeid, "Die Behandlung alttestamentlicher Zitate als Ausgangspunkt der Quellenscheidung im 4. Evangelium," ZNW 24 (1925): 147–50; C. K. Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," JTS 48 (1947): 155–69; Merrill C. Tenney III, "Literary Keys to the Fourth Gospel," BSac 120 (1963): 300–308; Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: E.J. Brill 1965); Günter Reim, *Stu-*

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dien zum alttestamentlichen Hintergrund des Johannesevangeliums, SNTSMS 22 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); J. Luzarraga, "Presentación de Jesús a la luz del A. T. en el Evangelio de Juan," *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 51 (1976): 497–520; Max Wilcox, "On Investigating the Use of the Old Testament in the New," in *Text and Interpretation: Studies in the New Testament Presented to Matthew Black*, ed. Ernest Best and R. McL. Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 231–43; Peder Borgen, "John's Use of the Old Testament and the Problem of Sources and Traditions," in *Logos was the True Light and Other Essays on the Gospel of John*, Reliëff 9 (Thronheim: Tapir, 1983), 81–91; Martin Hengel, "Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums auf dem Hintergrund der urchristlichen Exegese," *Jahrbuch zur biblischen Theologie* 4 (1989): 249–88; Bruce G. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture: The Interrelationship of Form and Function in the Explicit Old Testament Citations in the Gospel of John*, SBLDS 133 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992).

2. See Richard Morgan, "Fulfillment in the Fourth Gospel: The Old Testament Foundations," *Int* 11 (1957): 155–65; John O'Rourke, "John's Fulfillment Texts," *SeEccl* 19 (1967): 433–43; C.F.D. Moule, "Fulfillment-Words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse," *NTS* 14 (1967–68): 293–320; F. F. Bruce, *The Time is Fulfilled: Five Aspects of the Fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New*, The Moore College Lectures, 1977 (Exeter: Paternoster, 1978).

3. See the references in Edward Malatesta, *Sr. John's Gospel 1920–1965: A Cumulative and Classified Bibliography of Books and Periodical Literature on the Fourth Gospel*, AnBib 32 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1967), 25–26; Gilbert Van Belle, *Johannine Bibliography 1966–1985: A Cumulative Bibliography on the Fourth Gospel*, BETL 82 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1988), 67, 104–5. For more recent literature see the entries in the annual biblical bibliographies.

4. In *The Use of the Old Testament in the New and Other Essays: Studies in Honor of William Franklin Stinespring*, ed. James M. Eiford (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1972), 3–65.

5. Freed (*Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*) counts 17 explicit quotations; Schuchard (*Scripture within Scripture*) knows 13 (without John 7:37, 42; 15:25; 17:12; 19:28; but with 13:16).

6. For the individual texts see section below on "Unclear or Unspecified References."
7. There seems to be a growing consensus that in many if not most cases, John has recourse to some form of the "Septuagint," that is, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, accessible to us mostly in Christian manuscripts from the third century onward. For this tendency see, particularly, Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, and a number of articles by M.J.J. Menken (see below, notes 25, 28, 29, and 32).

8. See Johannes Beutler, "Greeks Come to See Jesus (Jn 12:20)," *Bib* 71 (1990): 333–47, especially 345–46.

9. For John 14 and the traditional background of that chapter, see Johannes Beutler, *Habt keine Angst: Die erste johanneische Abschiedsrede (Joh 14)*, SBS 116 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984); for John 10:1–18, idem, "Der alttestamentlich-jüdische Hintergrund der Hirtenrede in Johannes 10," in *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and Its Context*, ed. Johannes Beutler and Robert T. Fortna, SNTSMS 67 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), 18–32, 144–47.

10. C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 31–49, particularly 47–49.

11. Barrett, "The Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel," 156, 169.

12. Morgan, "Fulfillment in the Fourth Gospel," 161, 164-65.
13. Moule, "Fulfillment-Words in the New Testament," 302.
14. Luzarraga, "Presentación de Jesús," 497-501.
15. Wilcox, "On Investigating the Use of the Old Testament in the New," 234-35.
16. Smith, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New," 53-58.
17. See Gottlob Schrenk, "γράφω κ. τ. λ.," in *TDNT* 1 (1964): 742-73; Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, 51-59 (see also below); Hans Hübler, "γράφω, γράφω," in *EDNT* 1 (1990): 260-64; on the "introductory formula," see Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, xv and passim.
18. For the almost complete absence of this term in the New Testament, see Schrenk, "γράφω," 751.
19. As we have seen (above, n. 5), the exact number of Old Testament quotations in the Gospel of John remains disputed among contemporary scholars, and so is the number of clear quotations.
20. For the origin of the threefold "canon" of the Hebrew Bible, see Nahum M. Sarna, "Bible: The Canon, Texts, and Editions," *Enclud* 4 (1971): 816-36, especially 816-26.
21. Cf. Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 47-57.
22. See *ibid.*, 61.
23. For rabbinic examples see Sarna, "Bible: The Canon, Texts, and Editions," 817.
24. Thus, Smend, "Die Behandlung alttestamentlicher Zitate," 147; more recently, Craig A. Evans, "On the Quotation Formulas in the Fourth Gospel," *BZ* 26 (1982): 79-83.
25. See M.J.J. Menken, "The Translation of Psalm 41.10 in John 13.18," *JSNT* 40 (1990): 61-79.
26. It is supported by κ and B , among other manuscripts, and as the shorter reading merits more confidence. The longer reading looks like an interpretation of the shorter one.
27. See Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 141-47. The text of the Old Testament *Vorlage* seems to remain uncertain.
28. See M.J.J. Menken, "Die Form des Zitates aus Jes 6,10 in Joh 12,40: Ein Beitrag zum Schriftgebrauch des vierten Evangelisten," *BZ* 32 (1988): 189-209.
29. See *idem*, "The Provenance and Meaning of the Old Testament Quotation in John 6:31," *NovT* 30 (1988): 39-56; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 33-35.
30. Freed (*Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, 11-16) thinks of a combination of Ps. 77:24 (LXX) and Ex. 16:4, 15.
31. Note Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Conception of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*, *NovT* Sup 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1965); Georg Richter, *Studien zum Johannesevangelium*, Biblische Untersuchungen 13, ed. by Josef Hainz (Regensburg: Pustet, 1977), 199-265.
32. Cf. M.J.J. Menken, "Die Redaktion des Zitates aus Sach 9,9 in Joh 12,15," *ZNW* 80 (1989): 193-209.
33. *Ibid.*, 198, with reference to Isa. 40:9; Zeph. 3:16.
34. See Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, 94-95, who considers also possible influence of Psalm 119 (118) and *Psalms of Solomon* 7:1.
35. See Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel according to St. John* (New York:

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36. *Ibid.*, 3.283.
37. Thus, *ibid.*; also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (xiii-xxi), AB 29A (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), 929. Both authors are skeptical about Psalm 22 (21):16 as possible textual basis for John 19:29.
38. Edwin Clement Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, ed. by Francis Noel Davey (London: Faber and Faber, 1940), 632.
39. Compare Johannes Beutler, "Psalm 42/43 im Johannesevangelium," *NTS* 25 (1978-79): 33-57 (esp. 54-56), with Hoskyns and Davey, *The Fourth Gospel*, and C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 42 n. 1.
40. See Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, 108-14; Schuchard, *Scripture within Scripture*, 134-36.
41. Thus Raymond E. Brown: "The 'one described in the Mosaic Law' could well identify Jesus as the Prophet-like-Moses of Deuteronomy xviii 15-18. The 'one described by the prophets' is harder to identify; it could be the Messiah, the Son of Man (Daniel), or even Elijah (Malachi)" (*The Gospel according to John* (i-xii), AB 29 [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966], 86).
42. That the whole of scripture seems to be intended in both instances has been seen already by Schrenk, "γράφω," 759.
43. See Johannes Beutler, *Martyria: Traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Zeugnischema bei Johannes*, Frankfurt: Theologische Studien 10 (Frankfurt a. M.: Knecht, 1972), 262-64, 353-55.
44. Gerhard Delling, "ἐρνεύω, ἐρευνᾶω," *TDNT* 2 (1964): 655-57, gives some examples from Philo (*On the Cherubim* 14; *The Worse Attacks the Better* 57, cf. 141) for this use of ἐρευνᾶω ("search").
45. See Schrenk, "γράφω," 764, who refers to *Testament of Levi* 13:2.
46. *Ibid.*, 754.
47. Skepticism towards this hypothetical source has increased recently. Those who defend it ascribe to it only two signs of Jesus (thus Hans-Peter Heckerens, *Die Zeichen-Quelle der johanneischen Redaktion*, SBS 113 [Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1984]) or all of them, including a considerable amount of the Johannine narrative (Jürgen Becker, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, 1-2, Ökumenischer Taschenbuch-Kommentar zum Neuen Testament [Gütersloh-Würzburg: Mohr-Echter, 1979-1981]; Robert T. Fortna, *The Fourth Gospel and Its Predecessor: From Narrative Source to Present Gospel* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988]). If the latter possibility is assumed, the distinction between John and his putative *Grundschrift* begins to vanish: at the end stands one single author with his school, as presumed by Martin Hengel, *Die johanneische Frage: Ein Lösungsversuch*, WUNT 67 (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1993).
48. As has been seen by C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*, 2d ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 78; cf. R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel: A Commentary*, ed. C. F. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1956), 336, for whom sign and reality merge in the death of Jesus. Brown (*The Gospel according to John* (xii-xxi), AB 29A, 1058-59) refers the "signs" of John 20:30 less convincingly to the miracles of Jesus and his postresurrection appearances.
49. Thus Beutler, *Martyria*, 223-27.
50. The arguments given by Freed (*Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of*

John, 51–59) for the opposite position do not seem to be convincing. There is hardly a Christian author before the time of Irenaeus who used Old Testament and New Testament side-by-side as “scripture” (cf. Freed, *ibid.*, 52). The examples given by Freed from *I Clement* (*ibid.*, 55) all refer back to Old Testament texts, even if transmitted by Hebrews. John 7:42 and 17:12 refer back to imprecise quotations from Amos, rather than to a Christian Gospel or previous words of Jesus, recorded as scripture. In this sense, see Hübner, “*γράφη, γράφω*,” 636–37.

51. See Schrenk, “*γράφω*,” 765.

52. This has been seen, rightly, by Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, 57.

53. See Schrenk, “*γράφω*,” 754, and the texts given by Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, 51–52.

54. Johannes Beutler, “Zur Struktur von Joh 6,” *Studien zum Neuen Testament und seiner Umwelt*, series a, 16 (1991): 89 (N.B. n. 2)–104.

55. See Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York and Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist, 1979), 67.

56. Consult the discussion in Beutler, “Psalm 42/43 im Johannesevangelium,” 54–55.

57. The twofold witness of scripture for the mission and the salvific death of Jesus, according to John, has been seen recently by Hengel, “Die Schriftauslegung des 4. Evangeliums,” 282.

C.K. Barrett

8

The Parallels between Acts and John

There is no more profoundly theological work in the New Testament than the Gospel of John. At the opposite end of the scale, as the most purely narrative work in the New Testament, is Acts. Certainly the contrast is a matter of degree. John tells a story, and in the past it has often been read as the most authentic and trustworthy account of the life of Jesus that we possess. Acts contains not only a narrative of things done by the apostles and their contemporaries, but also some of their speeches, and these contain theological affirmations. But the contrast remains, beyond all qualification, an important part of the variety that marks the New Testament, and it may therefore seem that little or nothing is to be gained by comparing Acts with John. One compares like with like, not opposite with opposite. One recalls, however, that Acts is the second part of a longer work, and that the first volume to which it is a sequel is one of the Synoptic Gospels. It is thus only one step removed from the question of the relation of John to those Gospels; this, as no one knows better than Moody, is a complex and disputed question.¹

A comparative study of two books in the New Testament can hardly fail to be of some value, even if its main result is an illustration of New Testament variety. Is it possible that a comparison of Acts and John may do more than this, and by setting the two-volume work of Luke-Acts in the early Christian tradition as a whole, give some hints (it will not give more) about the relation of John to the other strands in the tradition? There is all too little evidence to inform us about the Christian tradition, oral and written, in the first Christian century, and we cannot afford to neglect any of it. I may perhaps be allowed in this volume to recall, and with some pride, that Moody and I seem—quite independently—to have shared this view in the 1990 Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, at which he gave a brilliant paper on “The Problem of John and the Synoptics in Light of the Relation between Apocryphal and Canonical Gospels.”² In the end this problem will always involve looking at passages in John and in Mark (and Luke and Matthew) and comparing them in the greatest possible detail. But when this is done the result is often that A will conclude, “This proves that the two passages are independent,” and B, “This shows that the one author made use of the other’s work.”