the sabbath and framed in terms of a trial scene in which Jesus is at one with and fully represents God the judge. The issues are who is to be the judge of such claims and what are the criteria of judgement. The point of view of this Gospel's narrative emerges through the device of a defence speech in which the defendant is shown to be the judge who at the same time calls for a re-evaluation of the traditional criteria for judgement. For the Fourth Gospel what makes the difference is whether one starts with Jesus and his relationship to God or insists on one's own categories – Moses, Scripture, human glory and human conventions about testimony. Jesus himself has to become the criterion of judgement to which these other categories are subordinated and by which they are transformed. In the light of the divine testimony merely human assessment is to be rejected, but the earlier witness of the Scriptures and of Moses remains significant as long as both are interpreted in terms of God's present and decisive witness in Jesus.

(iii) THE FEEDING OF THE FIVE THOUSAND *6.1–15*

(1) After this Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee, or of Tiberias.[1] **(2) A great crowd followed him, because they saw the signs he was doing for the sick. (3) Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. (4) Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. (5) When Jesus looked up and saw that a great crowd was coming towards him, he said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread so that these people may eat?' (6) He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do. (7) Philip answered him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to have a little.' (8) One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, said to him, (9) 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they for so many?' (10) Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place, so the men sat down, about five thousand in number. (11) Then Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks, he distributed them to those who were sitting, so also the fish, as much as they wanted. (12) When they had had their fill, he said to his disciples, 'Gather up the pieces left over, so that nothing is lost.' (13) So they gathered them up, and they filled twelve baskets from the pieces of the five barley loaves which those who**

[1] The most difficult but also best-attested reading has two successive genitives for the name of the sea – 'of Galilee of Tiberias'. Variants have attempted to deal with the difficulty either by omitting 'of Galilee' or by inserting between the genitives an 'and' or the phrase 'to the regions of'. The translation adopted here deals with the awkwardness by inserting an 'or'. The alternative name for the sea will be found later in 21.1.

had eaten had left over. (14) When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, 'This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world.' (15) Since Jesus knew that they were about to come and seize him in order to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

The abrupt change of setting from Jerusalem to crossing the Sea of Galilee has led many to suggest that this new episode would most naturally follow on from the end of chapter 4 and that the sequence of episodes in the narrative must have become disarranged in the course of transmission. On this basis some have transposed the chapter order for purposes of their analysis. There is, however, no actual textual evidence for a different order and this view may well be over-concerned with geographical issues at the expense of thematic links. Whether or not 6.1 was originally linked with some other passage in an earlier edition of the Gospel, it makes excellent sense that the evangelist has placed the self-contained unit of 6.1–71 where he has. As will be seen, it illustrates superbly Jesus' claim in the last part of the previous chapter (5.39, 46–7) that the scriptures bear witness to him and that Moses wrote about him, because the bulk of the discourse consists in a Christological exposition of a scriptural passage from the Pentateuch, namely Exod. 16. In addition, the mention of healings in 6.2 may well presuppose the two previous healing miracles in 4.46–54 and 5.1–18, and it can be claimed that the narrator has already prepared readers for swift moves between Jerusalem and Galilee in 2.12–13 and 4.54.

The healing of the lame man had provided a platform for the discourse that followed, in which Jesus elaborated his defence of this activity on the sabbath in exchange with 'the Jews'. This chapter will follow a similar pattern. The feeding miracle will give rise to the discourse on the bread of life, which will again be conducted in exchanges with those who are designated as 'the Jews' (cf vv. 41, 52). The passage containing the feeding story falls into two parts. There is an extended introduction in vv. 1–4, which is followed by the account of the sign in vv. 5–15. The latter follows the pattern already noted for miracle stories with descriptions of the situation of need (vv. 5–9), of the miraculous act (vv. 10–11) and of the confirmation of and response to the act (vv. 12–15).

1–4 The introductory verses open with a spatial marker. The action that follows takes place in the vicinity of **the Sea of Galilee**. After crossing the sea, Jesus is followed by a crowd **because they saw the signs he was doing for the sick**. In fact, the narrative has only depicted one sign for the sick in Galilee so far, the healing of the official's son in 4.46–54. But there the Galileans have just been depicted as also having been in Jerusalem and seen what Jesus did there (cf. 4.45). No doubt readers are therefore also meant to recall both the Jerusalem healing in 5.1–18 and

the mention of the Jerusalem signs in 2.23–5. The latter passage reminds them that seeing the signs is important but needs to lead on to genuine faith, and prepares them for the depiction of the crowd's response later in vv. 15, 26, 30. The other major figures in the feeding and what follows are **the disciples** and they are mentioned next as being with Jesus when he **went up the mountain and sat down there**. The mountain will be referred to again in v. 15 when Jesus withdraws to it, but the narrative fails to indicate prior to this that Jesus and the disciples have come down from it. The inclusion of the mountain in the account may well be intended to invoke the scriptural significance of mountains as loci of revelation. In particular, Moses on the mountain represents the giving of Torah, which could be compared to bread (cf. Deut. 8.3). Now Jesus is on the mountain and will provide bread, through which he will be revealed as the bread of life which fulfils all that Torah represented. The narrator then inserts a temporal note – **now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near** – which interrupts the sequential flow. In its more extended chronology of Jesus' ministry this Gospel has three Passovers (2.13; 6.4; and the final one from 11.55 onwards). Like the mention of the mountain, the reference here draws attention to scriptural and Mosaic themes. The Passover is a particularly appropriate setting for the exposition of the exodus events that will follow in Jesus' discourse and for the eucharistic motifs that emerge at its end, since the eucharist was instituted at a meal which, if not itself a Passover meal, was associated from the earliest times with the Passover.

5–7 Instead of the disciples at the end of the day asking Jesus what to do because the crowd is hungry, as in the Synoptic accounts, here the miraculous element and the sovereignty of Jesus over the situation begin to be heightened in typically Johannine style, when, as soon as he sees the crowd coming, Jesus himself poses the question of food to Philip. Since there is no mention of the crowd's hunger, Jesus is presented as having determined simply to act as a gracious host. The question to Philip about food is thus not so much a response to need as a pre-emptive move made on the basis of his special knowledge that he will provide hospitality for those who have come to him. The narrator underlines this with his 'inside view' of Jesus' motivation – **He said this to test him, because he himself knew what he was going to do.** Jesus' question was not a genuine enquiry but a means of testing Philip. Jesus here is very much the divine figure, as later in the Lazarus story, when he can let Lazarus die because he is confident that the desired miracle will be worked. In taking Jesus' question at its face value, Philip fails the test and thereby becomes the victim in this instance of the misunderstanding motif. He responds on the merely human level by stating the practical problems of giving hospitality to such a large group instead of perceiving that, if Jesus could

supply wine in abundance (cf. 2.1–11), he can also be the source for the provision of food. Philip clearly represents the disciples as a whole and uses words similar to those attributed to the group in Mark. But again the differences here heighten the miraculous nature of the feeding. In Mark 6.37 the disciples think that two hundred denarii worth of bread would feed the crowd. Since a denarius was the usual wage for a day's work, two hundred denarii represent over a half a year's wages. But here Philip indicates that even this amount would be far too little – **Two hundred denarii worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to have a little**.

8–9 In John's elaboration of the story another named disciple is now introduced, **Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter**, and readers will recall that it is Andrew and Philip in whom the evangelist has shown particular interest already as key figures among Jesus' group of disciples (cf. 1.40, 43–4; cf. also 12.22). Whereas in Mark Jesus tells the disciples to find out how much food there is, here Andrew, also operating on the merely human level, locates a boy, a further addition to the Synoptic version, who has the five loaves and two fish, and then draws the obvious despairing conclusion, **But what are they for so many?** The Johannine details about the boy (παιδάριον) and about the loaves being barley loaves (ἄρτους κριθίνους) suggest the influence of the Elisha story in 2 Kgs 4 LXX, where the prophet miraculously feeds one hundred men with some barley loaves (ἄρτους κριθίνους – v. 42) and has some left over, and where the servant, who objected that the loaves would not be enough for a hundred men, has just been described as the prophet's παιδάριον (vv. 38, 41).

10–11 The amount of food Jesus will use is smaller than in the Elisha story and the numbers he will feed are far greater. Jesus gives instructions that the people are to be made to sit and the narrator comments that **the men sat down, about five thousand in number**. This agrees with Mark's story in seeing the crowd as being made up of men, among whom presumably the youth is to be included. Only Matthew mentions the presence of women and children in addition (cf. Matt. 14.21). John also agrees with Mark in commenting on the state of the grass. Mark notes its greenness (cf. 6.39), while here the narrator states that **there was a great deal of grass in the place**. Both comments indicate that the time of year was spring, and this fits the earlier reference in John's story to Passover (v. 4).

The scene is now set for the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fish. **Then Jesus took the loaves, and having given thanks, he distributed them to those who were sitting, so also the fish, as much as they wanted.** The language of taking the loaves, giving thanks and distributing recalls that used in the early church's eucharistic practice. The fish are mentioned el

that are collected later are all from the loaves, so that the readers' attention is kept on the bread. While the Synoptics have Jesus blessing the loaves, John employs the verb 'to give thanks' (εὐχαριστέω), as do Luke and Paul in the words of institution for the Lord's Supper (cf. Luke 22.17, 19; 1 Cor. 11.24), and thereby creates associations with the term that early on began to be used by Christians for the celebration of the meal (cf. *Did.* 9.1; 10.1, 7). The eucharistic connotations of the feeding will become more explicit through the last part of the following discourse, which expounds its significance (cf. vv. 52–8). In contrast to the Synoptics, which depict the disciples distributing the food to the crowd, here in the Fourth Gospel the focus is on Jesus as the distributor, the host at the meal he has supplied. And while the other versions simply state that the crowd were satisfied, John's account underlines the abundance of Jesus' provision more colourfully by portraying the men as all having 'as much as they wanted'.

12–13 The extravagance of Jesus' supply continues to be underlined. After the men **had had their fill**, the disciples still **filled twelve baskets from the pieces of the five barley loaves which those who had eaten had left over**. In all this the emphasis remains on Jesus' sovereign control. Whereas in the Synoptics the gathering up of the fragments is simply part of the description of the consequences of the miracle, here Jesus himself gives the order to gather up the fragments left over. That the purpose of collecting the remnants is **so that nothing is lost** is also distinctive to John. The verb can also be translated as 'perishes' and the clause has two connotations that will be picked up in the later discourse. In the Exodus story Moses also commanded that all the manna be gathered and none left over. When the people disregarded the instructions, the remaining manna bred worms and became foul (Exod. 16.19–20). The discourse will allude to this in terms of the food that perishes (v. 27). It will also go on to talk of Jesus not losing anything that the Father has given him (v. 39; cf. also 10.28; 17.12; 18.9). This might offer some support for the view that sees in the twelve baskets an allusion to the twelve tribes of Israel and therefore, in this context, to the new people of God. It does appear significant that after the conclusion of the discourse the evangelist will for the first time lay stress on twelve as the number of the disciples who constitute the core of this new people (vv. 67, 70, 71).

14–15 In the Synoptics there is no depiction of the response of the crowd to the feeding and no clear indication that they recognized what had really happened. The Fourth Gospel, however, reports the crowd's acclamation on the basis of what it has seen – **When the people saw the sign he had done, they said, 'This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world.'** There is some debate about whether the end-time prophet Jesus is perceived to be is to be identified with

the prophet like Moses of Deut. 18.15. The link with kingship in the following verse might well support such an identification, since in a number of Jewish traditions Moses was seen as a prophet-king. If so, the people view Jesus as preparing for a new exodus and, also like Moses, as supplying them with sustenance. But just as Nicodemus' confession based on Jesus' signs proved inadequate, so does the crowd's acclamation, as its sequel makes clear: **Since Jesus knew that they were about to come and seize him in order to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.** Again Jesus has special knowledge – this time of the crowd's intentions. Seeing him as the prophet-king, they want to install him as such. Jesus is a king, as the use of the title in 1.49 has already indicated, but any attempt by humans to make him king in some form of insurrection shows that they have not understood the nature of his kingship. This will be spelled out later in Jesus' dialogue with Pilate (cf. esp. 18.36–7). Meanwhile, in anticipation of the people's intended action, Jesus withdraws to the mountain mentioned earlier in the account. While this is the only clear narrative account in the Gospels of Jesus having to confront popular misunderstanding of his messianic mission, it is plausible to see the evangelist here reading between the lines of the last part of Mark's story. After feeding five thousand men, who have been grouped in military formation in the desert (cf. 6.39–40), Mark's Jesus has to compel his disciples, who had witnessed the miracle, to leave first, so that he can dismiss the crowd himself before withdrawing to a mountain to pray, something he only does in Mark's narrative at times of critical decision for his mission (cf. 6.45–6). Is Mark hinting that this was because of revolutionary zeal on the part of the crowd which the disciples might have fuelled by their knowledge of what had happened? In any case, it is John's account that draws out these political dimensions of the feeding.

Since this is the only miracle story common to all four Gospels, it is not surprising that the relationship among the accounts has generated a huge amount of discussion. On a first comparison of this pericope with its Synoptic counterparts (cf. Mark 6.32–44; Matt. 14.13–21; Luke 9.10–17), it is easy to be so impressed by its differences that one concludes that it must be a quite independent account of the same tradition that lies behind Mark. After all, as is frequently pointed out, the three Synoptic stories have 53 words that are common to all of them, while John has only eight words in common with the others, and they are the ones absolutely necessary to be telling the same story (five, two, five thousand, the loaves, twelve baskets of pieces). However, a different picture begins to emerge when one takes the broader context of John 6 as a whole into account and notes the parallels with the material in Mark 6.32—8.30. The feeding of the five thousand is followed immediately by Jesus' walking on the water (vv. 16–21; cf. Mark 6.45–52). There is a discourse on bread (vv.

25–58; cf. Mark 8.14–21), a demand for a sign (v. 30; cf. Mark 8.11–12), and a confession from Peter (vv. 66–71; cf. Mark 8.27–30). These broader correspondences suggest a clear dependence on the sequence Mark constructed and encourage a closer comparison of their feeding stories.

Mark, of course, has two feeding stories, the first involving five thousand and the second in Mark 8.1–10 involving four thousand. Some claim that the comparison with the Fourth Gospel shows that the latter has been influenced by both accounts. However, there is only one place in John where there is agreement with the feeding of the four thousand – the use of the verb 'to give thanks' before the distribution of the loaves (cf. Mark 8.6 and John 6.11). Interestingly, if there is any influence from the account of the second feeding it is likely to be from Matthew's version, where 'to give thanks' is also employed and where the setting for the feeding of the four thousand places Jesus on a mountain with crowds who have seen his healings (Matt. 15.29–31; cf. John 6.2–3).

The major comparison, then, must be between Mark 6.32–44 and John's account. Now the actual words shared by John and Mark (but not by the other two Gospels) are more than double the previous count and amount to eighteen. In addition to agreement on the basic elements of the multiplication of the five loaves and two fish for a crowd of five thousand men with twelve baskets of fragments being gathered up, both begin with Jesus crossing the sea and being followed by a crowd, both depict the incomprehension of disciples, who talk about two hundred denarii worth of bread, both mention the state of the grass, thereby indicating the time of year, and both conclude with Jesus retiring to the mountain. As has been seen, the variations on the basic structure within the Fourth Gospel's account are all fully explicable as belonging to distinctive Johannine stylistic and theological, especially Christological, motifs. The addition of the two named disciples, Philip and Andrew, cannot be attributed merely to the sort of details that get added on in the transmission of oral tradition. The singling out of these two figures is dependent on the evangelist's own interests as indicated in the account of the gathering of the disciples earlier and the introduction of the Greeks later, where he has made these two prominent in his presentation. The most obvious explanation appears to be that John was familiar with Mark's story and creatively reworked it, heightening the allusions to the Elijah tradition in the process by mentioning the barley and the youth. There is only one strong argument against this. Why, it is asked, if John knew Mark, does John omit Mark's reference to a setting in the desert or wilderness, which would fit so well with his later clear comparison of the feeding to the giving of the manna in the wilderness (cf. vv. 31, 49)? But this objection ignores the context of the passage. Unlike Mark, John needs the same crowd that were present at the feeding as the audience for the following discourse. Having decided to keep the feeding and the walking on the water together, as in Mark,

he must therefore find a way of getting the crowd over to the other side of the sea for the next day. He does not want to add to the complications of this transition. It is awkward enough to have to have boats showing up the next day (cf. vv. 22–3). With a wilderness setting John would also need to have the people stay overnight in the wilderness or give some other explanation, but by leaving the setting unspecified he can also leave the arrangements vague and allow readers to imagine that the next day the people have reconvened from their nearby homes before crossing the sea. Those who dispute the dependence of John's account on Mark still end up advocating that the Johannine version is best explained by a tradition similar to the version preserved in Mark 6. In the absence of any hard evidence for such a tradition and in the presence of so many clear indicators of a relationship with the version we do have, it seems more economical and more plausible to conclude that John has reworked Mark and not simply a pre-Markan tradition that looks very much like Mark.

The significance of this sign of the multiplication of loaves and fish will be explicated at some length in the material that follows in 6.26–58, where the focus will be on its pointing to Jesus himself as the bread of life. Here it is sufficient to observe that, like the previous signs, this one does indeed portray Jesus as the giver of life in abundance, this time through its central symbol of bread. The bread more than satisfies the five thousand who are fed and there is plenty left over. Jewish traditions pictured the abundant life of the end times in terms of a banquet at which the manna would again come down from on high (cf. e.g. Isa. 25.6; *2 Bar.* 29.5–8). This meal points to Jesus as the supplier of the life of the age to come. At the same time, because grain or bread was essential for survival and frequently in short supply, providing food for the people was an indication of political power. But this was an implication of the sign that Jesus wished to resist, since it failed to move beyond its material level to that to which it pointed, the divine life disclosed in Jesus. Jesus' gracious gift of life cuts across conventional expectations, whether they be those of disciples who are unable to perceive that Jesus has the resources to meet the full spectrum of human needs, or those of the crowd, who want to make the giver fit into their own categories of political power and influence.

(iv) The walking on the sea *6.16–21*

(16) When it was evening, his disciples went down to the sea, (17) got into a boat and went across the sea to Capernaum. It had already grown dark and Jesus had not come to them. (18) The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. (19) When they had rowed about three or four miles,[1] they saw Jesus

walking on the sea and coming near to the boat, and they were afraid. (20) But he said to them, 'I am; do not be afraid.' (21) Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land to which they were going.

This episode appears to disrupt the natural thematic flow of the narrative from the miracle of the supply of food to the discourse on the bread of life. The reasons for its inclusion at this point will be discussed below in reviewing its relation to the Markan account. As it stands, the episode can be seen to have its own function in relation to the surrounding material. It is told primarily from the viewpoint of the disciples, who are given a further disclosure of the identity of the one who has just multiplied the loaves and fish. Having withdrawn himself from those who would make him a political figure, Jesus now shows himself to his followers as the divine figure who cannot be reduced to conventional human expectations. While the crowds form the audience for vv. 22–59, it will be the disciples who are addressed in vv. 60–71. This epiphany (an extraordinary appearance of a divine or heavenly figure) forms part of the preparation for the critical decision about continuing to follow Jesus that the twelve will need to make. In addition, Jesus' self-identification with the words 'I Am' in absolute form prepares for the Gospel's first 'I Am' saying with a predicate in the following discourse – 'I am the bread of life' (v. 35).

The miracle of the walking on the water is unlike the three signs that have preceded it in that it is not immediately apparent that Jesus is responding to a clear situation of human need. The disciples are having difficulty rowing because of the weather but there is no suggestion that they are in danger or in need of being rescued from drowning. Their fear is not produced by the strong wind but by the miracle itself – Jesus' appearance on the sea. Nevertheless, the miraculous appearance does meet a basic need, that of being reunited with Jesus as a result of a successful sea crossing, and so the account of the epiphany does have the main elements of a typical miracle story. The setting is depicted in vv. 16–19a, Jesus' deed and word that constitute the epiphany are at its centre in vv. 19b–20, and it is rounded off with the disciples' response to and the further consequences of the miracle in v. 21.

16–19a The details of the setting are recounted rather enigmatically. After the feeding of the five thousand, the disciples get into a boat and begin to cross the sea to Capernaum. Why they have departed without Jesus is not explained. In Mark's account Jesus had instructed them to leave without

[1] The text has 'twenty-five or thirty stades'. A stade is just over 600 feet or just under 200 metres; hence the distance here is between three and four miles or between five and six kilometres.

him (6.45–6) and perhaps John expects readers familiar with Mark to supply this information. In contrast to Mark's story, however, the disciples' destination here is Capernaum rather than Bethsaida (cf. Mark 6.45). **It had already grown dark and Jesus had not come to them.** Many commentators want to read Johannine symbolism into the mention of darkness. But it is highly unlikely that the disciples are being depicted as in the darkness of unbelief and alienation from God and preferable to take this as a simple variation on Mark's temporal notes about 'evening' and 'the fourth watch of the night' (cf. Mark 6.47–8). The narration is done from the disciples' perspective. In the darkness they are on the sea and waiting for Jesus to come to them. It is not made clear precisely what the disciples' expectation about Jesus was, whether they were expecting him to take another boat and catch up with them and whether he would do so by himself or accompanied by others. It may be better, therefore, simply to take this clause as a narratorial aside for the benefit of readers, who are being informed that the disciples are still alone. The narrator then proceeds to indicate that the sea was rough, not to suggest the disciples' perilous state but their slow progress – they had only **rowed about three or four miles**, and thus were not much further than the middle of the lake.

19b–20 At this point the disciples **saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near to the boat, and they were afraid. But he said to them, 'I am; do not be afraid.'** On the surface level of the narrative Jesus' words have the force of 'Don't take fright, it's me!' But the narrator's comments have already made clear that the disciples know it is Jesus. What makes them afraid is that he is walking on the water and it is this that cries out for explanation. This is why the portrayal of Jesus here is not simply a conventional self-identification and instead has all the trappings of a scriptural theophany. Job 9.8 depicts God as Creator trampling the high places of the sea and the LXX version employs similar language to that of John by speaking of God walking on the sea as on dry ground. Later in Job 38.16 LXX God appears to Job in a whirlwind and speaks of having come in creation on the springs of the sea and walked in the recesses of the abyss. Walking on the sea can also be attributed to Wisdom (cf. Sir. 24.5–6). Similar imagery can be used for God's acts of salvation, particularly in the exodus (cf. Ps. 77.19 – 'your way was through the sea, your path through the mighty waters; yet your footprints were unseen'; cf. also Isa. 43.16). In the Jewish Scriptures theophanies evoke fear and their audiences have to be enjoined not to be afraid (cf. e.g. Gen. 15.1; 26.24; 46.3; Judg. 6.23). This, of course, happens here with Jesus' miraculous appearance. But the injunction not to fear is coupled with the divine name revealed to Moses in the appearance in the burning bush. Deutero-Isaiah takes up this formulation and uses 'I Am' (ἐγώ εἰμι)

eight times in an absolute way for God's self-identification as the one true God (cf. Isa. 41.4; 43.10, 25; 45.18; 46.4 (twice); 48.12; 51.12 LXX). What is more, throughout the same section of Isaiah there are frequent divine exhort-ations not to fear. John has μὴ φοβεῖσθε, which is found in Isa. 40.9 LXX, while Isa. 41.10, 13; 43.1, 5; 44.2; 54.4 LXX all have μὴ φοβοῦ. This brief portrayal of Jesus is therefore pregnant with meaning. He is being presented as the embodiment of the God who walks on the water and whose self-proclamation is 'I Am; do not be afraid.'

21 Having made this point about Jesus' identity clearly, the narrator concludes the epiphany miracle briefly and enigmatically. The disciples **wanted to take him into the boat**. Whether they succeeded in their intention is not related. Instead, no sooner do they have the intention than **immediately the boat reached the land to which they were going**. It is hard to see this as anything other than a further miraculous consequence of Jesus' presence. There is no mention of the disciples who had been rowing slowly against the wind now quickening their pace and making it speedily to the shore. The arrival at the destination is instantaneous. In Mark's story there is a hint of the miraculous at this point, since the wind dies down as soon as Jesus enters the boat (Mark 6.51). But, as always where there are Synoptic parallels, the Fourth Gospel makes its miracle story even more impressive. In this ending there are also further echoes of motifs associated with the use of the 'I Am' formulation in Deutero-Isaiah LXX, where the divine self-manifestation has saving significance for Israel. Not only has Jesus' appearance on the water shown that he is the one 'who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters' (Isa. 43.16) and that 'when you pass through the waters, I will be with you' (Isa. 43.2), but it is also now made clear that his presence has 'made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to cross over' (Isa. 51.10).

Again there is debate over whether John has made use of his knowledge of Mark 6.45–52 or rather had independent access to a pre-Markan tradition. Those who take the latter view point to the relative brevity of John's account in contrast to Mark's and its lack of typical Johannine embellishments and symbolism and suggest that John may therefore represent a more primitive form of the tradition than Mark. But any common source has to be hypothetical, and it is just as easy to explain John's brevity and differences from Mark in terms of his reworking of the latter as it is to suggest his greater faithfulness to an unknown earlier tradition. It has already been noted that this story makes for an awkward fit in John's narrative sequence. He retains the story in its Markan sequence immediately after the feeding of the five thousand despite the relative disruption of his own move from sign to discourse, because its

main theme is so congenial to his overall portrayal of Jesus. At the same time he minimizes the disruption by concentrating on this main theme in Mark's story. On closer examination it can be seen that nearly all Mark's additional wording comes from his including the arrangements by which Jesus dismissed the crowd at the beginning and from his characteristic emphasis on the gross misunderstanding of the disciples, both in the extra details of the depiction of the walking on the sea and in his editorial comments at the end. John has already dealt with Jesus' withdrawal from the crowd in 6.14–15 and in terms, as has been noted, that suggest knowledge of Mark. He does not pursue the misunderstanding of the disciples in the same major way as Mark and is not interested in it at this point. Mark has an extra element from scriptural theophanic accounts, namely, the initially strange formulation – 'he wished to pass by them' (6.48), which employs the same Greek verb as in the LXX versions of the passing-by entailed in various theophanies (cf. Exod. 33.19, 22; 34.6; 1 Kgs 19.11) and angelophanies (cf. Gen. 32.31–2; Dan. 12.1). He also has the disciples thinking that this phenomenon was a ghostly apparition (6.49). So in their incomprehension they mistake a divine revelation for the appearance of some sea spirit. John omits this depiction of mistaken identity plus Mark's closing stress on the disciples' obtuseness in order to concentrate on the essentials of the Christophany. He retains the stripped-down Markan account precisely because it fits so well with his own emphases. The signs all point to the unmistakably divine creative power at work in Jesus and here is a story that again shows Jesus' control of the elements. As has been noted, his distinctive ending, where what amounts to a second miracle is succinctly added, is characteristic of the way his signs always trump any similar Synoptic miracles. But, more importantly, he keeps the self-identication of Jesus from Mark's story in exactly the same words, dropping only the initial exhortation, 'Take heart,' because it contains the 'I Am' formulation, which will be of such significance for his own portrayal of Jesus' divinity. Indeed, it may well be that the Markan account (cf. also Mark 14.62) provided the catalyst which enabled John to develop the potential double meaning of 'I Am' into the major feature it becomes in his own high Christology, in which Jesus is the embodiment of divine self-revelation.

What has already been said about the distinctives of John's account makes plain the force of this epiphany miracle for his narrative. The unlimited power of God as Creator and Saviour in the Jewish Scriptures is now attributed to Jesus, who also walks on the sea as on dry land, demonstrating his control over the forces of nature, thereby reuniting himself with his followers, reassuring them and bringing them across the waters to their destination. In the process Jesus is also presented as taking on his own lips the self-identification of this God in the formula 'I Am; do not be afraid.' As in 2.1–11

was primary, so here: Jesus' task in this narrative is to make God known (cf. 1.18) and in traversing the sea he displays dramatically to his disciples that he is one with God in deed and word (cf. also 10.31). In this way this tautly recounted episode can be seen not as a distraction from the rest of the chapter but as encapsulating in narrative form what is at the heart of the Fourth Gospel's Christology. As with some of John's earlier signs, the powers here attributed to Jesus were associated in the Graeco-Roman world with other deities. Mastery of the sea by being able to walk across it was a distinguishing characteristic of Poseidon or Neptune (cf. Homer, *Il.* 13.26–30; Virgil, *Aen.* 5.1057–9, 1081–5). Christian claims for Jesus can again be seen to counter implicitly any such rival claims.

(v) Jesus' discourse on the bread of life

6.22–59

(22) The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that no other boat had been there, just one, and that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples but that they had set off by themselves. (23) Then other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.[1] (24) So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum searching for Jesus. (25) And when they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, 'Rabbi, when did you come here?' (26) Jesus answered them and said, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you are searching for me not because you saw signs but because you ate of the bread and were satisfied. (27) Do not work for the food which perishes but for the food which remains for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.' (28) So they said to him, 'What must we do to work the works of God?' (29) Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in the one whom he has sent.' (30) So they said to him, 'What sign will you do then, so that we may see and believe you? What will you work? (31) Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."' (32) Then Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from

[1] The vast majority of manuscripts contain the last clause of v. 23. However, it is absent from some Western texts (D 086 $it^{a,d,e}$ $syr^{c,s}$ arm). The use of 'Lord' by the narrator is comparatively rare in this Gospel. Three references are to the post-resurrection Jesus (cf. 20.20; 21.7, 12) and one to the Jesus of the public ministry (cf. 11.2). But because of the earliness and variety of text-type among the witnesses that contain the clause, it should in all probability be regarded as the only other instance of this usage in the narration of the public ministry.