

OLD TESTAMENT CITATIONS IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

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Citations of the Old Testament appear conspicuously throughout the Gospel of John. There are some sixteen formal quotations, including two instances where the author refers to the teaching of Scripture but does not actually quote a text. Though John presents the Old Testament as prophecy about Jesus, the Gospel's use of Scripture is often problematic to modern readers. In some instances there is uncertainty about what Old Testament text (or texts) is being cited. It is also difficult at times to understand how a cited passage is being interpreted or upon what basis the interpretation or argument made from the passage can be legitimate. This paper will address all of these issues. In addition, since most of John's Old Testament references are intended to substantiate Jesus' claims about himself, we need to ask how John's use of the Old Testament functions apologetically. In what way do these citations argue that Jesus is the Messiah?

Citations In The Discourses of John's Gospel

John's citations of Scripture fall under two categories: (1) References to the Old Testament located in the discourses of John's Gospel. These discourses are normally given by Jesus. (2) References to the Old Testament made by the author in the course of his narration. Surveying first the discourses, we find seven occasions where the Old Testament is cited:

- **John 1:23.** John the Baptist claims to be *"a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"* in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3.
- **John 6:31.** Jesus claims to be the true bread from heaven, in response to the crowd's citation of Psalm 78:24, *"He gave them bread out of heaven to eat"* (cf. Ex. 16:4, 15 and Neh. 9:15).

- **John 6:45 (cf. 6:65).** In the midst of His “bread of life” discourse, Jesus cites Isaiah 54:13, *“And they shall all be taught of God,”* to point out that God draws the faithful to himself.
- **John 7:37-39.** Jesus promises the living water that was foretold by Scripture. The source of this citation is problematic, a matter to be addressed below.
- **John 10:34.** Having implied His equality with God, Jesus defends himself against the charge of blasphemy by appealing to Psalm 82:6, *“I said, ‘You are gods.’”* Jesus’ argument from this verse of Scripture will be discussed below.
- **John 13:18 (cf. 17:12).** Jesus says that one of the disciples will betray Him and fulfill Psalm 41:9, *“He who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against me.”*
- **John 15:25.** Jesus says that the Jewish nation’s unjust hatred of Him fulfilled Psalm 69:4 (or Psalm 35:19), *“They hated me without cause.”*

These discourse citations address themes that are integral to the teaching of John’s Gospel, viz., Jesus’ heavenly origin, divine nature, salvific function, and rejection by His own people. Two of the above citations have certain difficulties that warrant special discussion.

“Rivers of Living Water”

In John 7:37-39 the apostle tells us of Jesus’ address to the Jewish crowds who had come to Jerusalem for the annual Feast of Tabernacles.

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out saying, “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being [lit. *belly*] shall flow rivers of living water.’” But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (NASB)

This citation of Scripture raises several problems, chief of which is the fact that Jesus' quotation does not match any Old Testament passage.¹ The basic idea of Jesus' words, however, is found in many places (e.g., Num. 20:11; Psa. 78:15-16; Isa. 12:3; Ezek. 47:1; Zech. 12:10; 13:1). *Living water* was an ancient expression that designated fresh spring-water as opposed to water kept in a cistern and vulnerable to stagnation. Living water was a perfect symbol to designate the spiritual blessings of God. The Old Testament often compared the revelation of God to life-giving water (e.g., Psalm 1:2-2; 147:18-19; Isa. 55:1-3; Neh. 8:1). Several Old Testament prophecies spoke of the Spirit's blessings in the last days as an out-pouring of rejuvenating water (e.g., Isa. 12:3; 44:3; Ezek. 39:29; 47:1-11; Joel 2:28-32; 3:18; Zech. 12:10-14:19). Accordingly, the image of living water was commonly used by Jews as a symbol for the Holy Spirit, just as John interprets it here (e.g., 1QS 4:19-21; *Jubilees* 1:23-25; *Genesis Rabbah* 70:8). Ancient Jewish literature speaks repeatedly of water as a symbol of divine revelation (*Damascus Document* 3:16-17; 6:4-11; 19:34; *Isaiah Targum* on Isa. 12:3; *Genesis Rabbah* 70:9).

I conclude therefore that in John 7:37-39 Jesus is not quoting one particular passage, but is making a summative statement about what Scripture taught on this subject.² Supporting this conclusion is the fact that the way in which Jesus introduces the citation, with the words "as the Scripture said," is not the normal way that John's Gospel introduces Old Testament quotations; typically we see introductory formulas like "that the Scripture might be fulfilled" or "it is written." But the introductory statement of 7:38, "as the Scripture said," resembles other occasions in the Gospel where summations of Old Testament teaching are given (viz., 7:42; 20:9).

John tells the reader that when Jesus uttered these words He was speaking of the blessing of the Spirit whom He would give to believers after His glorification (i.e., death and resurrection). One of the recurring themes of John's Gospel is that Jesus is the one who bestows the Spirit (1:33; 3:34; 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:13; 20:22). John says that Jesus gave this teaching at the culmination of the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 37; cf. v. 2) – a key bit of information, for the events associated with this feast provide the backdrop for this entire chapter of John's Gospel and help us to understanding why Jesus said these words to the Jewish crowds on this occasion.

Tabernacles And The Water-Drawing Ritual

Tabernacles was a pilgrimage feast prescribed by the Mosaic Law to celebrate the final harvest of the year and to herald in the winter rains. It commemorated early Israel's years in the wilderness of Sinai, a time when God's provision of potable water was a constant necessity. By the Hasmonean period an additional ritual had begun to be practiced during this feast: the high priest would pour out an oblation of water upon (or beside) the altar of burnt offering (*Antiquities* 13.13.5). How this practice began cannot be determined with certainty, but it seems to have been the basis for an elaborate ritual that the *Mishnah* and subsequent Rabbinic documents say was practiced during the second-temple period.³ Each morning during Tabernacles a priest drew water from the Siloam pool with a golden flask. This pool, located just to the south of the temple, was fed by the fresh waters of the Gihon spring and served as an important water source for the people of Jerusalem (cf. John 9:7). The waters of the pool were adequate, but not overly abundant, and the Jews of Late Antiquity were not able to increase the flow.⁴ After drawing water from the Siloam, the priest carried the water-filled flask to the temple in a great procession. When he arrived at the temple the priest poured out the water at the altar of burnt offering as an offering to God (*Mishnah: Sukkah* 4:9).

This water-drawing ritual called to mind a collage of scriptural teachings about God's provision of water to Israel (Koester 173-181). First of all, it suggested "the rock" that gave water to the Israelites as they wandered in the desert of Sinai. Exodus and Numbers speak of several occasions when God supplied the people with water from natural spring wells and rocks (Ex. 15:23-25; 17:1-7; Num. 20:2-11; 21:12-18). This led to a common expression among the Jews that a rock of living water had, so to speak, "traveled" with Israel throughout their wilderness journeys. Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities*, a first-century work, says that God "brought forth a well of water to follow them" (10:7); "[it] followed them in the wilderness forty years and went up to the mountain with them and went down into the plains" (11:15).

These words reflect the language of Numbers 21:16-18, a passage that facilitated the image of a supernatural water-source accompanying Israel through the wilderness. This passage talked about Israel's journeying onward from Beer (a Hebrew word for "well"). But the ambiguity of the Hebrew is such that the text can also be read as if *the well* journeyed onward, a reading that is reflected in *Targum Onkelos*: "And thence was given them the well . . . It was given to them from the wilderness. And from the time that it was given them, it descended with them to the rivers, and from the rivers it went up with them to the height." This *Targum* illustrates a common Jewish hermeneutic principle: if a passage can bear a double meaning that fits in with the overall theology of Scripture, such a phenomenon should be treated not as coincidental, but as an intentional part of God's revelation (Pickup, "Eschatological Interpretation" 83-99).

It is clear that the water-drawing ritual at Tabernacles symbolized the rock in the wilderness. The *Tosefta* tractate on the Feast of Tabernacles says, "And so the well which was

with the Israelites in the wilderness was a rock, the size of a large round vessel, surging and gurgling upward, as from the mouth of this little flask, rising with them up onto the mountains, and going down with them into the valleys. Wherever the Israelites would encamp, it made camp with them" (*Sukkah* 3:11). Speaking of the many water-sources in the desert as a single source that accompanied the Israelites on their journeys probably seemed especially appropriate to Jewish interpreters because these God-given waters signified the presence of Yahweh. This point may have been enhanced by Psalm 78 (a psalm cited in John 6:31) which describes Yahweh's provision of water in the wilderness (vv. 15-20) and then calls Yahweh Israel's "rock" (v. 35). Similarly, Jeremiah speaks of Yahweh as "the fountain of living water" (2:13; 17:13). Paul himself uses this motif in 1 Corinthians 10:4 where he calls the traveling rock in the wilderness a representation of Jesus: "For they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ."⁵

The Feast of Tabernacles also reminded Jews of other water-images in Scripture. Isaiah 12:3 uses water as a symbol of future salvation. Ezekiel 47:1-11 describes a fountain of water that will flow from the Jerusalem temple in the last days, its waters vivifying all that they touch. Joel 3:18 and Zechariah 12:10-14:19 envision a similar scene. To Jewish interpreters, such passages could mean only that the well that had accompanied Israel in the past would return in the future and provide an abundance of life-giving water, the blessings of the Holy Spirit. Zechariah 14:8-19 specifically connected this eschatological fountain with the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. Thus, the water-drawing ritual was a symbolic anticipation of the eschatological promise of the Spirit (*Mishnah: Sukkah* 4:9; *Jerusalem Talmud: Sukkah* 55a). Since Ezekiel 47:2 envisioned the eschatological waters flowing out southward from the temple, the priest conducting the water-drawing ritual brought the water drawn from the Siloam pool

through the southern gate of the temple. The flask of water that he poured out at the altar was an oblation calling upon God to send forth the waters of the Spirit (*Tosefta: Sukkah* 3:3-4, 9-11).

All of the above data argues that in John 7:37-39, when Jesus called upon the Jewish people to come to Him so that He might quench their thirst, He was alluding to a well-known montage of ideas that the annual Feast of Tabernacles called to mind – from ancient Israel’s blessing of water in the wilderness to the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days. But Jesus did more than invoke a traditional motif. He transformed this motif so that it applied to himself: “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.” Jesus implies that He is the rock that provided water to Israel in the past and He would be the fountain providing spiritual water in the future. In a dramatic way, Jesus is claiming to be the source of eternal life.

“From His Belly . . .”

Jesus grounds His assertion in the teaching of Scripture: “As the Scripture said, ‘From his belly shall flow rivers of living water’” (v. 38). But the terminology Jesus uses when He gives this synopsis of Scripture is puzzling. Why does He say that the living water will flow from a *belly*? Such wording is not used in the Old Testament passages about the Spirit and living water. The Greek word *koilia* normally designates “the stomach” or the “innermost parts” of a person’s body (Arndt & Gingrich 437). But this term also could have been appropriate when speaking of a fountain or spring. The fissure in the earth where a channel of fresh water emerged was commonly spoken of as the “mouth” (*stoma*) of a spring. Therefore the underground recesses from which the water originated could aptly be spoken of as a spring’s *koilia* (belly). Also, the Hebrew word for “well” (*ma`yān*) in Isaiah 12:3 is quite similar in sound to the Aramaic word for “belly, internal organs” (*mē`în*). Consonantly, the two words are identical, and this similarity

may have facilitated a connection between a belly and a well (Marcus 329-330). The Septuagint often translates the Hebrew equivalent of the latter term with the word *koilia*. This kind of exploitation of homographs was common in Jewish exegesis of Scripture (Goldin 271-281). It may be that Jesus' terminology on this occasion did not originate with Him, but was from a common aphorism used by Jews to summarize Scripture's teaching about the fountain of living water.⁶ In any case, the term *koilia* allowed Jesus to make the subtle point that the living water would not flow out of a literal well, but out of a person.

But how can Jesus say that Scripture taught that spiritual water would flow out of a person? As we have seen, the image of the Spirit as water flowing from a rock, a well, or a fountain is found frequently in the Old Testament, but nowhere do we read of water coming forth from a person. This seems to be a point where Jesus expands upon the Jewish conception of Scripture's teaching.⁷ The Jews envisioned the water-source of Scripture in material, impersonal terms, as a kind of supernatural rock that traveled with Israel and represented Yahweh's presence. But Jesus expands upon this motif by personifying the water-source and associating it with himself and those who believe in Him.

This leads us to a final problem with this citation, a particularly knotty one. Who is the person from whom the water will flow? When Jesus says that the water will come out of *koilia autou* ("his belly"), does He mean that it will flow from himself, or from a believer? The issue depends largely upon how one translates the Greek. If we understand the Greek sentence to end with the word "drink" (*pinetō*), then we would translate Jesus' words similarly to the NASB: "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'" This rendering makes the believer the one from whom the living water flows. However, if we understand the sentence to continue until the

word “Me” (*eme*), then Jesus’ statement could be translated as follows: “If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me, and let the one who believes in Me drink. As the Scripture said, “From his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” This rendering (favored by the New English Bible and many commentators) opens up the possibility that Jesus is referring to himself as the source of the living water.

Arguments for either translation can be offered (see Freed 23-24; Balfour 368-370; Jones 153-156; Ridderbos 272-274). If the latter translation is adopted, then the lines of vv. 37-38 show a parallel structure that accords with Jewish poetic style (though it must be admitted that the parallelism is somewhat rough). More significantly, it would seem to fit better with the overall context of John’s Gospel if Jesus were presenting himself here as the source of the living water. As noted above, the explicit, recurring teaching of the Gospel is that Jesus is the giver of the Spirit and believers are its recipients. Jesus’ words most naturally suggest that the out-pouring waters are for the benefit of persons other than the one from whose belly they flow (Morris 423-426; contra Carson 323-324), which argues that the waters flow from Jesus and not from believers. Since the Gospel emphasizes throughout that Jesus is the one who provides the Spirit, it makes good sense to see that point reiterated here.

On the other hand, if the former translation is adopted and Jesus is speaking about water welling up in the belly of believers, these words are quite close conceptually to His earlier remarks to the woman of Samaria: “Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life” (4:14). So a well of water in believers is not a concept foreign to John’s Gospel. Neither is the idea that a believer’s indwelling Spirit will provide benefit to others. For example, in John 20:22-23 Jesus symbolically bestows the Holy Spirit upon His disciples as He

commissions them to preach the gospel to the world. It is also important to remember that even if we adopt the translation that treats believers as the ones from whom the living water flows, this does not negate the fact that Jesus' overall teaching on this occasion is that He is the ultimate source of the living water. Jesus said, "If any man is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."

All things considered, I lean toward the translation of John 7:37-38 adopted by the NASB and most modern versions.⁸ Jesus is promising that the living water He provides will flow abundantly from the belly of one who believes in Him. Perhaps Jesus' application of this role to believers is based upon the statement of Isaiah 12:3, one of the passages that the Jews connected with the water-drawing ritual of Tabernacles and saw as eschatological in focus (*Jerusalem Talmud: Sukkah 55a; Babylonian Talmud: Sukkah 48b, 50b*). Isaiah 12:3 says, "With joy you will draw water from the *wells* of salvation." The plural here is perhaps significant. Jesus presents himself as the prophesied fountain of life that would gush forth in the last days, but associated with this eschatological fountain would be many wells from which the life-giving water could be drawn, i.e., the believers in Jesus who would take His message to the world.⁹

"I said, You Are Gods"

In John 10:34 Jesus cites Psalm 82:6 to defend His right to speak of himself as divinity:

Has it not been written in your Law, "I said, you are gods"? If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, "You are blaspheming," because I said, "I am the Son of God"?

To a modern reader, Jesus' argumentation from this Old Testament passage may appear puzzling. How does this verse of Scripture justify Jesus in equating himself with God? To answer this question, we must deal with a preliminary issue – the proper interpretation of Psalm 82:6 itself.

Psalm 82 describes a heavenly court where Yahweh addresses an entourage of beings identified as “gods” (Heb. = *elohim*; LXX = *theoi*) and “sons of the Most High.” A similar scene is depicted elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Psalm 58; Job 1 - 2). Psalm 82 speaks of these beings as the rulers of the nations, but Yahweh condemns them for failing to carry out this function properly and He warns of impending judgment: “I said, ‘You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes’” (vv. 6-7). Who are the ones addressed in this psalm? Are they heavenly (divine) beings of some kind, or human beings?

Several commentators have argued that human kings are under consideration here, specifically the human rulers of the Gentile nations (e.g., Delitzsch 400-404; Johnson 29-32). A more recent suggestion is that the psalm addresses the exodus generation of Israel who received the Law at Sinai but subsequently failed to keep it (e.g., Carson 398-400; Ellis 131). Interpreters like these, who understand the psalm to speak of human beings, say that Jesus is simply using the psalm to show that Scripture sometimes applies the term “god” to others besides Yahweh, even to human beings (Johnson 31; Carson 397). But this explanation turns Jesus’ argument into a rather weak retort to the Jewish crowd, since it fails to address their real objection. The issue at hand was not simply that Jesus applied such terminology to himself, but that He did so because He saw himself as greater than other human beings and equivalent in nature with God (v. 33). Surely Jesus does not resort to semantic quibbling while ignoring His critics’ real objection.¹⁰

Furthermore, if Jesus simply wanted to argue the fluidity of biblical language, He might have cited Psalm 45:6 or Isaiah 9:5 where the Davidic king is addressed as “god.”¹¹ But Jesus purposely chose to cite a passage that addressed wicked beings by this term and He contrasts himself with these beings in order to rebut the charge of blasphemy. So Jesus’ argument hinges

upon His dissimilarity with the ones addressed in the psalm as much as similarity with them. It is an argument *a fortiori*; if beings such as these could be equated with deity, then certainly He “whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world” could so speak of himself (v. 36). I suggest that the use of this particular passage was critically important to the argument at hand and the nature of that argument goes beyond mere semantics.

Jesus’ argumentation becomes clear only if we understand that the ones addressed in Psalm 82 are not human beings, but divine (angelic) beings to whom God had granted authority over the respective nations of the world. I suspect that the reticence of some commentators to see the psalm in this light is because of a presumed problem with harmonizing a group of divine beings called “gods” with the biblical doctrine of monotheism. Liberal commentators, in fact, have commonly used this interpretation to support their humanistic theories about the evolution of Israel’s doctrine of monotheism (Weiser 556-561). But in reality the standard biblical polemic against polytheism is exactly what Psalm 82 reflects. Let me explain.

The Old Testament depicts the nations of the world as under the control of spiritual beings whom the Gentiles mythologized and worshiped in ignorance of the creator, Yahweh. But these divine beings were in fact angels, created by Yahweh and subject to His authority. Deuteronomy 32:8 says, “When the Most High divided the nations, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God.”¹² The Old Testament responded to polytheism not by saying that the gods whom the Gentiles worshiped did not exist, but by saying that they were only beings to whom Yahweh had granted the rulership of the nations and that ultimately they were answerable to His authority.

The Old Testament presents these spiritual beings as rebels against Yahweh’s authority. They led the Gentiles away from a knowledge of Yahweh and also failed to see that true justice

was administered in their respective nations. This matter is addressed in Psalm 58, Daniel 10:13-21, and here in Psalm 82. Accordingly, Israel's history of digression into the polytheistic practices of the Gentiles is described in this way: "They sacrificed to demons who were not God, to gods whom they have not known" (Deut. 32:17). The New Testament refers to these beings when it speaks of the "rulers and authorities" over whom Jesus was elevated (Eph. 1:20; 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:22; Heb. 1:4-14). Satan is described as their leader (Rev. 12:9; Eph. 6:11-12). Psalm 82 is Yahweh's proclamation of judgment upon these rebellious beings: "God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the rulers [gods] . . . I said, 'You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High. Nevertheless you will die like men, and fall like any one of the princes.' Arise, O God, judge the earth! For it is Thou who dost possess all the nations" (vv. 1, 6-8).

This angelic interpretation of Psalm 82 (rather than a human-being interpretation) is the way in which the psalm was understood by ancient Jewish interpreters. The *Targum* of Psalm 82:6 reads, "I said, you were reckoned just as angels, and you all just as angels on high." A Qumran manuscript, 11QMelchizedek, interprets Psalm 82 as an account of the archangel Michael (called here by the name Melchizedek) administering Yahweh's judgment upon these rebellious spiritual beings: "Its interpretation concerns Satan and the spirits of his lot who rebelled by turning away from the precepts of God . . . Melchizedek will avenge the vengeance of the judgments of God . . . and he will drag them from the hand of Satan and from the hand of all the spirits of his lot. And all the 'gods of Justice' will come to his aid to attend to the destruction of Satan" (Emerton 399-401).

If the beings addressed in Psalm 82 are indeed angelic rulers, what then is Jesus' argument to the Jewish crowd? I understand Him to be saying that if it was not blasphemous for wicked angels to be designated as gods, then it was certainly not blasphemous for Him to be so addressed, seeing that He was the one whom "the Father sanctified and sent into the world." If the infallible Scripture called such angelic rulers "gods," then certainly Jesus had the right to speak of himself as deity, the Son of God in a divine sense, since He had been commissioned by Yahweh to rule over all the nations of the world.¹³ The angels were beings "to whom the word of God came," God having commanded them to function on His behalf as rulers of the nations. Yet they failed in their task, hence they received the rebuke of the psalm. Jesus, on the other hand, was faithfully carrying out His commission.

The fundamental problem of the unbelieving Jews was that they had not considered that God's plan might involve the incarnation of deity. Jesus says in vv. 37-38 that His miraculous works should have proven to them that He spoke appropriately when He identified himself with God: "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, so that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." But as a supplement to the evidence of His miracles, Jesus appeals to Psalm 82 to provide the Jews with the conceptual framework necessary for comprehending His claim of divine status.

Citations In The Narrative Portion Of John's Gospel

In the course of his narration John notes several Old Testament passages that Jesus fulfilled.

- **John 2:17.** Jesus' cleansing of the temple, one of the main events that stirred up the Jewish authorities against Him and led to His crucifixion, was foretold by Psalm 69:9, *"Zeal for Your house will consume me."*
- **John 12:13-16.** Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey's foal was foretold by Zechariah 9:9, *"Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."*
- **John 12:38-40.** The hard-hearted disbelief of the Jews was foretold by Isaiah 53:1, *"Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"* and by Isaiah 6:10, *"He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them."*
- **John 19:24.** The theft of Jesus' garments by the Roman soldiers as He hung upon the cross fulfilled Psalm 22:18, *"They divided my outer garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."*
- **John 19:28.** John says that Scripture was fulfilled when Jesus requested a drink moments before He succumbed to death. The apostle quotes no passage for the reader, a matter to be discussed below.
- **John 19:36-37.** The fact that the Roman soldiers did not break Jesus' legs but pierced His side with a spear fulfilled two passages: Psalm 34:20, *"Not a bone of him shall be broken,"* and Zechariah 12:10, *"They shall look on him whom they pierced."* These citations will be analyzed below.

- **John 20:9.** John says it was only after Jesus was raised from the dead that the disciples came to understand that Scripture had foretold His resurrection. No passage is cited, but the reader is probably expected to understand that all of the previously cited passages that spoke of a righteous sufferer's vindication by God (Pss. 69, 22, 34, 41; Isa. 53) were fulfilled by Jesus' resurrection.

All of these narrative citations of the Old Testament pertain to the issue of Jesus' rejection and execution. A lone exception might seem to be the citation of Zechariah 9:9 which is applied to Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem. But even this citation serves to highlight, by way of contrast, the final rejection of Jesus by a Jewish populace who hailed Him as their messianic king less than a week before. We should also recall that two of the discourse citations dealt with Jesus' rejection: Psalm 41:9, which Jesus cited to explain that one of His own disciples would betray Him (John 13:18), and Psalm 69:4, which He cited to explain the people's unjust hatred of Him (John 15:24). Clearly, the Jewish nation's refusal to accept Jesus as the Messiah is a problematic issue that the Gospel of John seeks to address, and the Old Testament citations (especially the narrative citations) constitute a major part of its response to this problem.

The Gospel's two major sections are commonly identified as chapters 2-11, a discussion of Jesus' signs, and chapters 13-20, a discussion of Jesus' passion on the cross. The transition between these two sections comes in chapter 12, and in particular the statement in 12:37-40 about how the Jewish rejection of Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10 (Smith 239-241). The narrative citations of Scripture proliferate in the passion section of the Gospel and increase in number as John describes the events that occur when Jesus is on the cross (John 19:24, 28, 36-37). It is evident that a major aim of John's Gospel is the accomplishment of an apologetic goal: to demonstrate by means of Scripture that the seemingly problematic rejection and execution of

Jesus by people who should have accepted Him as their Messiah was not a problem at all, but precisely accorded with the foreknowledge of God (Evans 228). Several of the narrative citations of Scripture warrant special analysis, a matter to which I now turn.

“I Thirst”

In John 19:28-30 the apostle says that, moments before succumbing to death, Jesus performed a final act in order to fulfill Scripture:

After this, Jesus, knowing that all things had already been accomplished, in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I am thirsty.’ A jar full of sour wine was standing there; so they put a sponge full of the sour wine upon a branch of hyssop, and brought it up to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head, and gave up His spirit.

The word translated “fulfilled” in v. 28 is *teleioō*, which is not the same word (*pleroō*) that the author uses everywhere else to indicate Jesus’ fulfillment of Scripture. The word *teleioō* suggests the idea of completion, which ties in with John’s statement in this verse that Jesus’ request for water before succumbing to death, a request that prompts the Roman soldiers to give him vinegar, marked the final, intentional act He performed so that Scripture might be “accomplished.” (The cognate verb *teleō* is used here.) By carrying out the final task of His earthly mission, Jesus *completes* Scripture (Brown 1072).

Despite the introductory formula (“in order that Scripture might be fulfilled”), the apostle quotes no Old Testament passage here, a surprising aberration from his pattern of citation. He clearly expects his readers to recognize the passage(s) he has in mind simply by the events he relates, but more than this, his method prods a reader to engage in the act of contemplating how this incident at the crucifixion of Jesus might fulfill Scripture (Brawley 433). Psalm 69 – a text cited earlier in the Gospel (2:17) – readily comes to mind. It speaks of a righteous sufferer’s

agonizing thirst and receiving of vinegar as a further indignity: “I looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (vv. 20-21). John uses the word *oxos*, which can denote sour wine (as reflected by the NASB’s rendering above) or also vinegar, which would tie in precisely with what is said in Psalm 69. Psalm 22 describes a scene similar to that of Psalm 69, and it may have been in the apostle’s mind: “My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaves to my jaws; and Thou dost lay me in the dust of death” (v. 15). Just four verses earlier, in John 19:24, the apostle cited verse 18 of Psalm 22 as he recounted the soldiers’ theft of Jesus’ garments.¹⁴

Of these two passages, Psalm 69:20-21 and Psalm 22:15, the former accords more precisely with the details John relates about Jesus’ thirst and the soldiers’ response, so most commentators understand it to be the passage John is alluding to here. Yet even if these verses in Psalm 69 are what the apostle has in the forefront of his mind, he can hardly expect an attentive reader not to also think of the corresponding portion of Psalm 22, a similar Old Testament text about a just man who suffers unjustly. Once we reflect upon the correspondence of these two psalms, we are reminded of other psalms of lamentation that speak of a righteous sufferer whose agony finds no relief. Moreover, it is clear that the thirst of Jesus is the thirst of a dying man for whom a parched throat is the physiological signal of the imminence of death, and Psalm 69 and Psalm 22 can be read accordingly. Thus, the pitiable cry of Jesus for relief from His thirst calls to mind a host of Scriptures that speak of a just man who must endure unjust persecution up to, and perhaps even including death (e.g., Pss. 6, 13, 22, 38, 55, 69, 88, 102, 109, 142, 143; Isa. 53; Lam. 3).

I suggest, then, that the presence of an introductory formula here (“in order that Scripture might be fulfilled”) without a subsequent quotation (of Psalm 69 or any other passage of Scripture) is a purposeful aberration from John’s pattern of citation because he wants his readers not only to recall the obvious correspondence of Psalm 69 with this incident at the crucifixion of Jesus, but because he also wants them to contemplate other passages of Scripture that, to varying degrees, related a similar motif.

It is doubly significant that John records this incident. Not only does it provide another example of Jesus’ fulfilling Scripture, it reminds us of Jesus’ earlier claim to be the source of living water. The discordance of that earlier claim with Jesus’ own present need for water is striking. But that, of course, is the very point the apostle wants to make about Jesus: He had to undergo the thirst of death that He might become the fountain of the water of life for all believers. John wants his readers to realize that even Jesus had to drink the bitter cup of death. We are reminded of Jesus’ earlier words in the garden of Gethsemane: “The cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11).

“Not a Bone Shall Be Broken” . . . “Him Whom They Pierced”

In John 19:32-37 the apostle reports that Jesus died without the Roman soldiers having to break His legs to hasten death. A soldier pierced Jesus’ side with a spear to verify that He was dead.

The soldiers therefore came, and broke the legs of the first man, and of the other man who was crucified with Him; but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately there came out blood and water. And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe. For these things came to pass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, “Not a bone of him shall be broken.” And again another Scripture says, “They shall look on him whom they pierced.”

The apostle cites two passages here, which I will discuss in reverse order. John says that the piercing of Jesus' side fulfilled Zechariah 12:10, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."¹⁵ The Masoretic Text of the Old Testament, upon which our modern translations are based, renders the quoted phrase from Zechariah in the first person ("they shall look on *Me* whom they pierced"), making God the subject. But John's quotation uses the third person ("they shall look on *him* whom they pierced").¹⁶ We cannot be certain whether John used a textual tradition that was different from the (faulty?) Masoretic reading, or whether he simply gave an interpretive translation of his own (see Freed 114-115; Menken 494-511). But in either case the sense of the verse is not materially altered. The Masoretic Text switches to the third person in the next line as it discusses the one who is pierced, so an *agent* of Yahweh (rather than Yahweh himself) is surely intended in this verse. This is how the Rabbinic literature understands the passage, even though the rabbis use the Masoretic Text (*Jerusalem Talmud: Sukkah 5:2; Babylonian Talmud: Sukkah 52a*).¹⁷

The Zechariah passage speaks of various segments of the population of Israel mourning over this pierced individual, a mourning that begins with the house of David (vv. 10-14). Ancient Jewish writers did not make much use of this passage, but by the Rabbinic period some Jewish interpreters suggested that it referred to the death of a non-Davidic messianic figure whom they called Messiah ben Joseph. They envisioned him as an eschatological warrior who would be slain by Gentile armies in the last days. In contrast to this figure, the rabbis said the Davidic Messiah was granted everlasting life so that he would never die (see Pickup, "Suffering Messiah" 144-154).¹⁸ Whether this Rabbinic interpretation of Zechariah 12:10 arose as a counter-exegesis to the Christian interpretation, or whether it arose independently of Jewish-Christian dialogue is

uncertain. In any case, the Gospel of John presents the events at the crucifixion of Jesus as a proper explanation of the Zechariah passage. Jesus, the Davidic Messiah, was slain on a cross and pierced by a Roman spear before being resurrected to life and glory.

The spear wound in Jesus' side is an important eyewitness detail for John. In John 20:25-27 the wound serves as one of the identifying marks of the resurrected Jesus. The out-pouring of water and blood from the wound served to verify that Jesus was dead, but John's recording of this detail also serves a thematic purpose: a reader of the Gospel can hardly fail to miss the connection between this flowing of blood and water from Jesus' side and His earlier claims that His blood was true drink (6:53-56) and He would bring forth living water for believers (7:37-39).¹⁹ Yet it is only through His death that Jesus can provide these fluids of life. It is noteworthy that in the very section of Zechariah that John cites, there is a prediction of the eschatological spiritual water: "In that day a fountain will be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity" (Zech. 13:1; cf. 14:8). It is evident that the apostle is reading these verses of Zechariah as an integrated unit, such that the piercing of this figure in 12:10 is what leads to the out-pouring of the eschatological water in 13:1. Jesus' death on the cross brings forth the spiritual water of life, a doctrinal truth that is symbolized by the flow of literal blood and water from His pierced side.

The apostle also sees significance in the fact that Jesus' bones remained intact throughout His ordeal on the cross. He says that this was in order "that the Scripture might be fulfilled, 'Not a bone of him shall be broken.'" John's quotation reminds us of the instructions in the Mosaic Law concerning the Passover lamb, the bones of which were not to be broken (Ex. 12:46; cf. Num. 9:12). Broken bones defiled an animal and made it unsuitable as a sacrifice (Lev. 22:19-22). Jesus' crucifixion, of course, takes place during the annual Passover Feast (John 19:14), so it

makes sense to think that John wants his readers to see the crucified Jesus as a kind of paschal lamb, sacrificed for the sins of the world. But we will not fully appreciate the appropriateness of the allusion unless we see that John is actually citing Psalm 34:20, a passage that uses the proscription against breaking the bones of a sacrificial animal to describe God's vindication of a godly sufferer: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken."

In Jewish thought it was common to see a connection between a righteous sufferer and an animal offered to God. According to the Mosaic system, animals were sacrificed in order to atone for sin, but Scripture taught that human suffering and mortality were the necessary consequences of sin; a godly man had to endure these things if he was to receive God's pardon. Entrance into the eschatological kingdom would come when the righteous were raised from the realm of the dead into the eternal kingdom of God. Thus, in addition to ritual sacrifice, the Rabbinic Literature speaks of suffering as a means of atoning for one's sins (e.g., *Tosefta: Kippurim* 4:6-8; *Sifre To Deuteronomy* 32:5.5). It also speaks of death as an atonement for a lifetime of sins so that a penitent man might be fully reconciled with God (*Mishnah: Yoma* 1:1-2; 8:8-9; *Abot* 39.5.1; 40.5.1).

The language of Psalm 34 was likely understood in a similar way by Jews of the first century. The psalm depicts a godly sufferer who seeks deliverance from God. The psalm promises that the sufferer's bones will not be broken. It may seem to a modern reader that such a promise offers meager comfort for someone in pain, but if so, we have missed the import of this biblical symbol. First of all, to the Jewish mind, broken bones signified the complete destruction of a person. The bones of a corpse survive the decomposition process whereas the other parts of the body do not. Jewish burial practices in Late Antiquity therefore treated the bones of a dead

person with great respect, re-interring them after decomposition of the flesh had occurred (Kraemer 17, 22). According to the symbolic vision of Ezekiel 37:1-14, bones in a tomb awaited only the renewal of flesh and sinew at the resurrection of the last day. Therefore broken bones are a symbol of a person's full destruction, of complete helplessness and despair (Psa. 42:10; Lam. 3:4; Num. 24:8). The promise of Psalm 34, that the bones of the sufferer will not be broken, indicates that he has hope in the midst of his great pain. This psalm would probably have been read by most Jews as a promise of the future resurrection of the righteous.

Unbroken bones also served as a sacrificial symbol. Since breaking the bones of a sacrificial animal rendered it useless as an offering to God, the broken bones of a sufferer would suggest his unacceptability before God. Isaiah 38:13 uses this idea as a poetic figure to depict the fullness of God's judgment upon a sinful man: "Like a lion – so He breaks all my bones; from day until night You make an end of me." In Psalm 51:8-9 there is an expansion of this theme; bones that are broken by God but later restored to health are a symbol of the divine forgiveness of sin: "Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities."

In Psalm 34, therefore, the fact that the sufferer's bones are not broken indicates his vindication before God. God reckons him as a righteous man and not as a sinner, and He will therefore deliver him from death: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the LORD delivers him out of them all. He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked; and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The LORD redeems the soul of His servants; and none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned."

In view of the above, it becomes clear why John saw such significance in the fact that the two criminals crucified with Jesus had their legs broken, but the bones of Jesus remained intact.

Jesus suffered and died, but He did not die as a sinner estranged from God; He died as an acceptable sacrifice to God.²⁰ Jesus did not undergo this ordeal to atone for any sins of His own, but His perfect life of righteousness enabled Him to function in death as an atonement for the sins of the world. The Lamb of God, whose flesh and blood must be partaken of regularly by His disciples in order that they might have life in themselves (John 6:53-58), had to be a perfect sacrificial lamb. The symbolism would have collapsed if Jesus' bones had been broken on the cross; He would no longer signify an acceptable offering. But John tells us that when Jesus died on the cross, His side was pierced yet His bones remained intact, and it was in this state that Jesus was able to function as a perfect atonement for sin.

It is significant that after His resurrection Jesus presented himself in this form to the disciples (John 20:20-27). Alive and well, but wounds not healed – resurrected unto life, but still pierced and unbroken – a perfect sacrifice. It is in this state that Jesus continually presents himself before believers' minds, as a righteous sufferer, the ever-present Lamb of God.²¹

The Purpose of The Citations

The citations of the Old Testament in John's Gospel clearly have an apologetic function, that of substantiating the claim that Jesus is the Christ of prophecy. But the citations are not the primary argument for this proposition, whether we speak of primary argument in terms of John's rhetoric or in terms of formal logic. Rhetorically, John presents the miracles of Jesus as the primary verification of His claims. John 20:30-31, the purpose statement of the Gospel, says, "Many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." The reason why the apostle charges his unbelieving Jewish countrymen with hardness of heart is not because they failed to realize that Jesus fulfilled Scripture, but because they did not

accept Jesus' signs (John 12:38-40). As we have seen, even when Jesus argued His right to equate himself with God on the basis of Psalm 82, He still appealed to His miraculous works as the primary verification (10:37-38).

Also in terms of formal logic, John's Old Testament citations could not serve as the primary argument for Jesus' messiahship – that is, as proof in-and-of-itself that Jesus is God's Son. The miraculous signs did serve such a purpose, since they provided objective evidence of God's presence in the ministry of Jesus. But the correspondence of particular events of Jesus' life to certain portions of Scripture did not, *ipso facto*, verify Jesus' claims. This point is often overlooked by modern apologists, so let me elaborate upon it.

Whether Jesus fulfilled Scripture depends upon the meaning of Scripture, and discerning the meaning of prophecy is not a precise exercise, free of all optionality. First of all, most of the passages that John says Jesus fulfilled – e.g., Psalms 22, 34, 69, Isaiah 53 – were not necessarily regarded as “messianic prophecies” by the Jews of that period. That is, whether such passages had application to the Davidic Messiah was part of the issue at hand, a proposition that itself needed to be proven, and not a premise that all would assume. It is certainly true that Jewish hermeneutics of Late Antiquity tended to presuppose that, on some level of meaning, any portion of Scripture might have potential eschatological reference (Neusner 95-105). But the mere assertion by John or anyone else that a passage referred to the Messiah did not prove that such was the case.

It is interesting, however, that the Rabbinic writings (2nd - 7th centuries) do make messianic applications of some of the very passages that John uses, including Isaiah 53, Psalm 22, and Zechariah 12. But a messianic application of these passages does not necessitate the precise exegesis that John's Gospel gives to them. Ancient Jews gave these passages other,

hypothetically plausible interpretations. For example, Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 were not understood to refer to a dying Messiah.²² Rabbinic Jews interpreted these texts to be speaking of the Davidic Messiah's suffering sickness or persecution, but not a suffering that resulted in death (*Ruth Rabbah* 40; *Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin* 98b).

Even if one granted that the Christian exegesis of these passages was the most plausible, namely that passages like Isaiah 53, Psalms 22, 34, 41, Zechariah 12, et al., spoke of a sufferer who died, other referents besides Jesus could be proffered. Jesus was not the only religious leader to be betrayed by a disciple or even to claim that such disloyalty fulfilled Scripture. The so-called Teacher of Righteousness, the leader of the Jewish sect associated with Qumran, cited Psalm 41:19 ("He who eats my bread has lifted up his heel against me") to speak of his betrayal by a friend (1QH 5:23-24), just as we see Jesus doing in John 13:18. He also applied to himself much of the wording of Psalm 22 (1QH 5:5-19) (Brown 1459).²³ Nor was Jesus the only martyr to die at the hands of the Romans. Rabbinic Jews sometimes applied Isaiah 53 to Rabbi Akiba who suffered imprisonment and death during Rome's persecution of Jews in the second century (*Jerusalem Talmud: Shekalim* 5:1). The pierced individual of Zechariah 12:10 did not have to be the Davidic Messiah. Another figure might be in view, which, as we noted previously, is exactly how Rabbinic Jews interpreted this prophecy.

One might argue that the language of a passage like Psalm 22 must be foretelling the plight of a crucifixion victim, but Jewish literature never interpreted it this way. In any case, it is apparent that other Jews besides Jesus suffered that horrible fate, so the mere assertion that the passage speaks of a crucifixion victim does not mean that Jesus of Nazareth must be the one in view. So again, whether any of the above passages prophesy about Jesus is not something that the mere historical circumstances of Jesus' life and death can substantiate. Nor, as we have seen,

does John argue that they can do so *ipso facto*. The miracles of Jesus are what John presents as the primary proof of the claim that Jesus fulfilled these Scriptures.

Am I suggesting that the Old Testament citations in John's Gospel have no valid apologetic role? Not at all. I am simply saying that they provide a *secondary* argument in support of Jesus' claims. But it is a very important argument nonetheless. If Jesus truly was the Messiah of prophecy, then He had to fit what the Scriptures depicted about such a figure. But it was at this point that the claims of Jesus met opposition, since the kind of messianic figure He represented was not at all in line with the picture of the Messiah that the Jews derived from their reading of Scripture. Jews of the first century typically anticipated that the royal Messiah would be a military figure who would deliver them from Roman occupation and oppression. He would be a human being, an earthly ruler reigning in Jerusalem, not a divine being who would rule in heaven (Collins 67-68). Jesus of Nazareth was antithetical to Jewish messianic expectations at nearly every point. Most of all, the Jews did not anticipate that the Messiah would generate such disfavor with the Jewish religious establishment that they would finally execute him as a criminal. The events of Jesus' life were so discordant with Jewish messianic expectations that it seemed impossible for Jesus to be whom He claimed to be.

One of the tasks of John's Gospel, therefore, is to counter this Jewish argument against the messiahship of Jesus. The Gospel does so by proposing another way of reading the Scriptures, one that was markedly different from the way the Scriptures had been interpreted before. This task was first undertaken by Jesus during His ministry, as John makes clear in his record of Jesus' discourses. As our earlier survey indicated, the citations of Scripture in the discourses of Jesus primarily address the most controversial affirmations He makes about himself, viz., His heavenly origin (6:31-65), His sending of the Holy Spirit (7:37-39), His divine

nature (10:34), and His unjust betrayal and rejection (13:18; 15:25). In the citations located in the narrative portions of the Gospel, the issue of Jesus' rejection and execution comes to the forefront (2:17; 12:38-40; 19:24; 19:28; 19:36-37; 20:9). The apostle's use of citations increases dramatically as he recounts the death of Jesus on the cross (19:24, 28, 36). The narrative citations are intended to show that the most objectionable issue about Jesus had actually been adumbrated by the Scriptures. Jesus' rejection by the Jewish people and subsequent death were in accordance with God's plan and were the means of Jesus' glorification (7:39, 12:16, 23; 13:31; 17:1).²⁴

Furthermore, John is arguing that Christianity's concept of the Messiah better fit the pattern of Scripture than did the Jewish idea of a non-suffering Messiah who would be well received by his people. The Jewish idea ignored one key element in particular: it did not apply to the Messiah those passages of Scripture that spoke of a righteous sufferer and martyr. Only passages that evoked positive images – e.g., images of an ideal king, warrior or judge – were deemed by Jews to be legitimate messianic adumbrations. John's Gospel argues, in effect, that passages like Psalm 22, 34, 41, 69, Isaiah 53, and Zechariah 12 should not be ignored when formulating an idea of the Messiah. John's Gospel proposes a less truncated way of reading Scripture messianically, one wherein the Messiah of prophecy is understood to be someone who will be rejected by his own people and die as an atonement for sin before assuming his position of royal glory. John's Gospel is arguing that the events of Jesus' life offered not only a plausible model for what the Scriptures meant, but a model that actually was truer to the full content of Scripture than any other model.

This way of reading Scripture was not readily apparent, a fact attested by the failure of the Jews and even the disciples of Jesus to anticipate the kind of Messiah Jesus was. But John's use of the Old Testament argues that Jesus is the key to unlocking the real meaning of

Scripture.²⁵ At several points the apostle speaks to the reader about his own realization of how Jesus fulfilled Scripture. He tells how, after Jesus' resurrection, he and the disciples came to understand how the Psalter's depiction of one who is persecuted because of zeal for the temple was a description of what happened to Jesus (2:17), how Zechariah's vision of a king's advent on a donkey's colt presaged the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (12:13), and how the passages that spoke of the vindication of a righteous sufferer were adumbrations of the death and resurrection of Jesus (20:9). By discussing his own realization of how these Scriptures referred to Jesus, the apostle exemplifies the journey of enlightenment that he wants all readers of Scripture to make.

By offering a secondary support to Jesus' messianic claims – i.e., a rebuttal to those who denied that Jesus could be the Messiah of prophecy – the citations of Scripture in John's Gospel also perform another function, one that has startling implications. John's Gospel interconnects passages and interprets them in ways that they had never been interconnected and interpreted by Jews before. John bids us to look at these passages as a foretelling of the events in the life of Jesus. By reading these passages in this way, the way we read Scripture as a whole is radically transformed. A level of meaning opens up to us wherein the underlying message of Scripture becomes the foreshadowing of a singular figure, a divine agent of God who suffers as a righteous servant unto death and then is raised to glory. Jesus becomes the focal point of God's revelation. Looking at what was written beforehand in terms of Jesus' life, we see Him on page after page. Scripture becomes Christ. The word becomes flesh.

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Endnotes

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1. It is sometimes suggested that the actual quotation of Scripture consists of the words, "If any man . . . in Me," rather than, "From . . . water," as given above. But this suggestion makes the manner of citation more awkward and contrary to the Gospel's ordinary procedure of using a formula to introduce a quotation rather than follow it. (John 1:23 might constitute the only exception to this rule.) Also, trying to ascertain the Old Testament passage(s) that support the quotation becomes an even greater difficulty than one encounters otherwise.
 2. Some interpreters of John have assumed that the word "Scripture," in the singular, must mean that a single Old Testament passage is in view (e.g., Maloney, 86). But this is not the case. There are other places in John's Gospel where the singular is used to refer to the Old Testament as a whole and not one particular passage (John 7:42; 20:9).
 3. The conclusion that the water-drawing ritual was part of second-temple Judaism seems sound, despite the fact that detailed discussion of the ritual is found only in Rabbinic sources. If Josephus (in the passage mentioned above) is not describing this full-fledged ritual, he is surely describing an early form of it. The earliest Rabbinic documents, the *Mishnah* and the *Tosefta*, speak of the water-drawing ritual and their description is such that it is hard to explain it in any way other than that it was truly practiced at Tabernacles from the Hasmonean period to the destruction of AD 70 (Balfour 375-379).
 4. The *Tosefta* tells how the Jews had been unsuccessful in increasing the Siloam's flow. When its mouth was widened in hopes that the water would gush forth, the flow actually diminished. Only when the mouth was stopped up did the original rate of flow return (*Arakhin* 2:6).
 5. Philo (*Legum Allegoriae* ii. 86) likens the rock in the wilderness to the Wisdom of God.
 6. If this is true, in the phrase *koilia autou* (normally translated "his belly") the antecedent of the masculine pronoun *autou* could be an unexpressed part of the quotation which the audience was expected to understand as the fountain of which Scripture spoke – e.g., the masculine nouns *māqôr* (used in Zech. 13:1) or *ma`yān* (used in Isa. 12:3; Joel 3:18). Thus, we could translate the citation, "As the Scripture said, 'From *its* belly (i.e., the belly of the fountain) shall flow rivers of living water.'"
 7. This procedure of transforming a common understanding of Scripture is inherent to the process of Jewish midrashic interpretation, one of the best discussions of which is Daniel Boyarin's *Intertextuality And The Reading Of Midrash*.
 8. Supporting this conclusion is a very early manuscript, P⁶⁶, which ends the sentence with the word "drink."
 9. John tells the reader (v. 38) that Jesus' teaching on this occasion was a prediction of the bestowal of the Spirit upon believers once Jesus was glorified. The apostle is speaking of the outpouring of the Spirit that began on the day of Pentecost after Jesus' death and ascension (Acts 2).

It was at that point in time that the new Law of the gospel of salvation began to be proclaimed by those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah. The basic idea behind Jesus' statement accords well with the *Isaiah Targum's* interpretive paraphrase of Isaiah 12:3, "And you will accept a new teaching from the chosen ones of righteousness."

10. Carson (399) suggests that Jesus resorts to quibbling over the usage of the word "god" in order to stall the violent crowd long enough to get them to consider the testimony of His words and works. I find this suggestion quite inadequate.

11. Psalm 45:6 uses *elohim*, Isaiah 9:5 uses *el*. Exodus 4:16 also comes to mind, where Moses is said to be "as God (*elohim*)" to Pharaoh.

12. This is the Septuagint reading. The Masoretic Text of the Old Testament says, "according to the number of the sons of Israel," but the Septuagint's reading has been supported by the Qumran fragment, 4QDeut¹. I Enoch 89:59 speaks of these angelic rulers of the nations as 70 in number, perhaps intended as a symbolic figure. The Old Testament never assigns a precise number.

13. Jesus's use of the expression "Son of God" on this occasion must have implied a divine being, and not simply a (human) Davidic Messiah. In this discourse Jesus had not previously spoken of himself as the Son of God, so He must be using the expression in a way that was equivalent to their charge, i.e., that He made himself equal with God.

14. Another passage John may particularly have had in mind is Psalm 42:1 where a righteous sufferer speaks of his thirst to be with God. This idea fits in with the context of John's Gospel, since John makes it clear that Jesus said "I thirst" knowing that He was on the verge of death and that His earthly mission was at the point of completion. His statement of thirst may therefore have a double meaning, that of physical thirstiness as well as His desire to complete His earthly task and be with God (Jones 203).

15. Zechariah 12:10 also seems to underlie Jesus' statement in Matthew 24:30 and Revelation 1:7.

16. The Septuagint translation of Zechariah 12:10 also uses the first person, but (mis)reads the verb in the relative clause as *rāqdû* ("they danced"), which creates greater confusion: "They shall look on me because they danced." See Menken 499-501. Normally, the textual form of the citations in John's Gospel corresponds closely to the Septuagint, but this is not the case here.

17. It is noteworthy that John does not use the first-person reading of this verse of Scripture to argue the deity of Jesus. Nor does any New Testament writer – a fact that regrettably does not prevent modern apologists from making this argument (e.g., Kaiser 223-225).

18. Outside of Christian literature, the only ancient Jewish writing that ever spoke of the Davidic Messiah dying was *Fourth Ezra* (7:26-44), though his death was not for any atonement purpose and seems to be only so that he can have a part in the general resurrection of the end time.

19. The analogy, of course, is even greater if we adopt the alternative translation of John 7:38

(discussed above) and understand Jesus as the one from whose belly the living water flows. One of the arguments for that interpretation of John 7:38 is what John records here, the blood and water flowing from Jesus' side. But the analogy is still present even if in the former passage Jesus is talking about water flowing from the belly of believers. It is rather poignant that, in order for believers to be able to receive the Spirit and spiritual water flow from their bellies, Jesus had to die and His own belly pierced, releasing blood and water.

20. Perhaps there is a parallel here to an idea expressed in the *Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin* 68a where it is said of Rabbi Eliezer, a man charged with heresy, "His soul left him in purity." These words meant that he died not outside the favor of God, but within it. (See Boyarin, *Dying For God* 37-41).

21. Thus, in John's vision in Revelation Jesus is depicted in such a condition – a Lamb standing as if slain, alive, but unbroken and with the marks of His death experience still visible (Rev. 5:6).

22. The Septuagint version seems to minimize the language that might suggest that the sufferer of Isaiah 53 dies (Sapp 170-192).

23. Much ado has been made of late about the Teacher of Righteousness' use of such passages supposedly indicating that he claimed to be a suffering-Messiah figure a century before Jesus did (e.g., Wise, *The First Messiah*). But Wise and others go far beyond the data when they assert that this individual claimed messianic status. There is no evidence that this was the case.

24. The signs of Jesus, in addition to providing supernatural confirmation of His claims, also symbolize the salvific purpose of His crucifixion and therefore argue the divinely purposive nature of His death (Trudinger 329-330).

25. Cf. Paul's discussion of the "mystery" of Scripture which is revealed in Christ (Rom. 16:25-26; Col. 1:26-27), a "veil" having been lifted so that Scripture can be fully understood (2 Cor. 3:14-16). Also note Luke's statement that the resurrected Jesus "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Luke 24:45; cf. 24:27).