

Christological Transformation of the Motif of “Living Water” (John 4; 7): Prophetic Messiah Expectations and Wisdom Tradition

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Abstract

“Living water” connects Jesus’s dialogue with the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well (John 4) with his teaching in the temple at the festival of *Sukkot* (John 7). Referring to a multifaceted biblical imagery, the theme of water interweaves elements of well stories, including Moses traditions (especially the gift of water out from the rock in the desert, later parallelized with the gift of the Torah), eschatological hopes (the fountain coming forth from the temple, the outpouring of the spirit), and sapiential images (wisdom and teaching, or the Torah, as fountain of life). Providing the life-giving water, Jesus is presented on the one hand as the “prophet like Moses” depicted in Deut. 18. On the other hand, he acts in the role of Wisdom, who invites those who are thirsty to come. In John 4 as well as in John 7, the gift of the water of life is connected with messiah discourses. While alluding to popular expectations of “the prophet” and “the messiah,” the Fourth Gospel’s presentation of the Χριστός goes beyond. Integrating the Wisdom strand with the concept of the Logos into its Christology, Jesus is portrayed to be more than a/the prophet.

[248] The motif of “living water,” which establishes an intratextual relationship between John 4:10–15 and 7:37–38, refers to a rich tradition of the imagery in the Hebrew Bible and in Jewish literature. Accordingly, Jesus’s dialogue with the Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob in John 4 develops a subtle water symbolism on several levels. The motif occurs again in chapter 7, where Jesus’s teaching in the temple is situated at the feast of Tabernacles with its solemn water ceremony. In both chapters the theme of water interweaves “messianic” expectations and wisdom traditions, which hints at the identity of the Johannine Jesus. As the one who gives (and is) the living water, he is presented on the one hand as (the)¹ “prophet like Moses” (cf. Deut. 18:15–19; 34:10–12),² and at the same time as surpassing the Moses

¹ Cf. the characters’ voices in John 6:14; 7:40 reflecting popular expectation, including 1:21, 25 in relation to John the Baptist.

² Irmtraud Fischer, “Das Prophetieverständnis von Dtn 18 als kanonische Deutekategorie,” in *Gottes Name(n): Zum Gedenken an Erich Zenger*, ed. Ilse Müllner, Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger and Ruth Scoralick, HBS 71 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2012), 151–68, underlines the significance of Deuteronomy 18 for the understanding of the *Nevi'im*. For diverging interpretations in ancient Judaism, see e.g. Günter Reim, *Jochanan: Erweiterte Studien zum alttestamentlichen Hintergrund des Johannevangeliums* (Erlangen: Verl. der Ev.-Luth.-Mission, 1995), 110–13.

tradition (in the frame of the Gospel’s overall development of the Mosaic theme)³ by connecting [249] it with other lines of tradition and especially the Wisdom strand. A similar blending of messiah expectations⁴ and sapiential motifs can be detected in 1 Enoch 48–49. The Fourth Gospel though goes a step further in relating wisdom traditions to the Χριστός. So, in its analysis of the water imagery in John 4 and 7, particularly in the context of contemporary “messianic” hopes linked to the theme of water, this paper shows how popular expectations, including that of “the prophet (like Moses)”, are taken up and creatively transformed in an intertextual reading of the Hebrew Bible that is rooted in Jewish tradition.

A. John 4

1. Setting

In search of deeper levels of meaning derived from intertextual links to biblical tradition, the location of the story in John 4 and its configuration of the main characters can offer some of the first clues. The χωρίον “that Jacob gave to his son Joseph”

³ See, for example, the surveys in Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology*, NovTSup 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1967); Marie-Émile Boismard, *Moses or Jesus: An Essay in Johannine Christology*, trans. B. T. Viviano, BETL 84A (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993); Reim, *Jochanan*, 110–44; Matthias Gawlick, “Mose im Johannesevangelium,” *BN* 84 (1996): 29–35; Andreas Lindemann, “Mose und Jesus Christus: Zum Verständnis des Gesetzes im Johannesevangelium,” in *Die Evangelien und die Apostelgeschichte: Studien zu ihrer Theologie und zu ihrer Geschichte*, WUNT 241 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 288–308; Stefan Schapdick, “Autorität ohne Inhalt: Zum Mosebild des Johannesevangeliums,” *ZNW* 97 (2006): 177–206. Stanley D. Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques*, JSNTSup 229 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), examines the function of the “off-stage” appearances of the Moses figure for plot development. John Lierman, “The Mosaic Pattern of John’s Christology,” in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman, WUNT II/219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 210–34, shows parallels by referring to the exalted position of Moses in Second Temple Judaism. Beyond the explicit mentions of Moses in the first half of the Gospel, there are also implicit references to the Mosaic tradition that have to be considered; see e.g. the allusions to Deuteronomy in the farewell discourses, where, for example, Jesus teaches the commandments καθὼς ἐνετείλατο μοι ὁ πατήρ (14:31; cf. Deut. 1:3; 4:5, 14; 6:1; 28:69; 34:9; and 18:18; particularly in the LXX), or cf. the intercessory prayer in Exod. 32 // John 17.

⁴ The concepts of “prophet” and “messiah,” stemming from different strands of tradition and linked with distinct types of eschatological figures, are, of course, not synonymous, but both are situated in a broader set of “messianic” expectations and thus interrelated in the Fourth Gospel: cf. the parallel statements in John 7:40–41; in 6:14–15 the people call Jesus “the prophet” who is to come and want to make him king, which shows a blurring of the lines. Meeks, *Prophet-King*, and Lierman, “Pattern,” 217–23, refer to traditions depicting Moses as king (see, for example, Philo, *Mos.* 1:158: ὀνομάσθη γὰρ ὅλου τοῦ ἔθνους θεὸς [cf. Exod. 4:16; 7:1] καὶ βασιλεύς; the tradition of a heavenly enthronement can already be found in the *Exagoge* of Ezekiel the Tragedian).

(John 4:5; cf. Gen. 48:22; Josh. 24:32)⁵ refers to Shechem,⁶ in the vicinity of which (πλησίον) Sychar is thus located, functioning as Samaritan [250] center.⁷ Jesus's encounter with the nameless γυνή ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας (John 4:7; vis-à-vis Jesus as Ἰουδαῖος, cf. vv. 9, 20–22) at the “well of Jacob” (πηγή τοῦ Ἰακώβ, v. 6) recalls Genesis 24 and particularly 29⁸, furthermore Exod. 2:15–22.⁹ Female figures serving as representatives or even symbols for a land or city conform to biblical conventions (cf. Zion, but also narrative characters such as Judith).¹⁰ As regards Samaria, Jer. 3:6–13 has to be mentioned, where Israel and Judah are portrayed as adulterous sisters. Even more drastically, Ezekiel 23 unfolds this imagery, describing Samaria as elder sister of Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 16:46–63, including Samaria in the future restoration: see 16:53, 55, 61; cf. Jer. 3:18).

Drawing water at noon (John 4:6: ὥρα ἦν ὡς ἕκτη; cf. 19:14) seems to be unusual (see Gen. 24:11).¹¹ Is this an allusion to Gen. 29:7?¹² But similarly Josephus lets Moses in Midian (εἰς τε πόλιν Μαδιανὴν ἀφικόμενος; cf. John 4:5: ἔρχεται οὖν εἰς πόλιν τῆς Σαμαρείας λεγομένην Συχάρ) take his seat “at (or even: on) a well” (ἐπί τινος φρέατος; cf. Exod. 2:15 LXX; in John 4:6: ἐπὶ τῇ πηγῇ)¹³ to rest [251] ἐκ τοῦ κόπου καὶ τῆς ταλαιπωρίας (cf. John 4:6: κεκοπιακῶς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοιπορίας) at noon (μεσημβρίας οὔσης), not far from the town.¹⁴

⁵ Gen. 33:18–20 reports the erection of an altar.

⁶ The sanctuary on Mount Gerizim and the submontane city were destroyed under John Hyrcanus (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 13.255–256).

⁷ Cf. Michael Theobald, *Das Evangelium nach Johannes: Kapitel 1–12*, 4th ed., RNT (Regensburg: Pustet, 2009), 308; Birger Olsson, *Structure and Meaning in the Fourth Gospel: A Text-Linguistic Analysis of John 2:1–11 and 4:1–42*, ConBNT 6 (Lund: Gleerup, 1974), 138–43.

⁸ Cf. the explicit references to Jacob in John 4. At the well, a family story starts which leads to the 12 tribes of Israel. In Jewish tradition the story in Genesis 29 becomes increasingly miraculous, which is reflected in the Palestinian targums (cf. e.g. Tg. Neof. Gen. 28:10: overflowing of the well). Furthermore, it is linked to the tradition of the well accompanying Israel on the wanderings in the desert (cf. the well in Num. 21:16–18 and 1 Cor. 10:4); on this, Olsson, *Structure*, 162–73; Jerome H. Neyrey, “Jacob Traditions and the Interpretation of John 4:10–26,” *CBQ* 41 (1979): 419–37 (422–23).

⁹ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 51–62, coined the term “betrothal type-scene.” Regarding the nuptial symbolism as underlying subtext in John 4, see Andrea Taschl-Erber, “Der messianische Bräutigam: Zur Hohelied-Rezeption im Johannesevangelium,” in *Das Hohelied im Konflikt der Interpretationen*, ed. Ludger Schwiendhorst-Schönberger, ÖBS 47 (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2017), 323–75 (335–45), and the bibliographical references given there.

¹⁰ As to representative characters in the Fourth Gospel, cf. e.g. Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), 32–73 (regarding the Samaritan woman, see 48–51).

¹¹ Cf. also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (I–XII): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*, AB 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 169; Klaus Wengst, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kapitel 1–10*, 2nd ed., ThKNT 4.1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 165.

¹² So Calum M. Carmichael, “Marriage and the Samaritan Woman,” *NTS* 26 (1980): 332–46 (336); Theobald, *Evangelium*, 309.

¹³ However, the Samaritan woman speaks of a φρέαρ (cf. vv. 11–12).

¹⁴ Josephus, *Ant.* 2.257.

2. Water Symbolism on Several Levels

Subsequently to Jesus's request δός μοι πειν (v. 7), the story in John 4 takes a different turn than e.g. in Gen. 24:14–21, for the woman points to the conventional barriers between her as a Samaritan and him as a Jew (cf. v. 9). In a role reversal, though, Jesus now offers *her* “living water” (v. 10; but see the intervention of Jacob in Gen. 29:10 or of Moses in Exod. 2:17), at the same time posing the central question that pervades their conversation (τίς ἐστὶν ὁ λέγων σοι), relating to his identity, which is revealed in several steps (an answer is given in v. 26 by the first “I am”-revelation of the Fourth Gospel: ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι).

The following dialogue unfolds the theme of water (an archetypal symbol of life), which gives coherence to the sections of the composition. According to the double (or multiple) encoding of key terms, which characterizes Johannine dialogues playing with several levels of meaning, a multilayered water symbolism¹⁵ overlies the superficial story-level. Among the biblical reference texts for the motif of living¹⁶ water, Jeremiah 2–3 takes special position, since it shows a similar metaphorical interaction of the imageries of water, marriage¹⁷ and true worship of God, on the one hand, and, on the other, it focuses on Israel as sister of Judah. In Jer. 2:13 YHWH complains about his people, whose love in the time of betrothal he recalls (v. 2): “They have forsaken me, *the fountain of living waters* (LXX: πηγὴν ὕδατος ζωῆς), to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water” (cf. 17:13 LXX: ἐγκατέλιπον πηγὴν ζωῆς τὸν [252] κύριον).¹⁸ In 2:18 the motif of drinking appears, and in v. 25 the motif of thirst (for a spiritual understanding, cf. also Ps. 42:2).

When in John 4:15 the Samaritan woman asks Jesus for the living water (κύριε,¹⁹ δός μοι τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ), so that she has no thirst any longer and does not need to come here to draw water any more (for a metaphorical understanding of ἀντλεῖν, see

¹⁵ As to the water symbolism in the Fourth Gospel, see e.g. Koester, *Symbolism*, 155–84; Larry Paul Jones, *The Symbol of Water in the Gospel of John*, JSNTSup 145 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1997).

¹⁶ For a physical understanding of “living” in the sense of fresh flowing water, cf. Gen. 21:19; 26:19 (in each case in the Septuagint: φρέαρ ὕδατος ζῶντος).

¹⁷ Since water generally serves as a symbol of life and fertility, the water symbolism also comprises sexual connotations. So the motif of living water in Song of Sol. 4:15 is transferred to the female protagonist, who is addressed in the Septuagint as πηγὴ κήπων and φρέαρ ὕδατος ζῶντος. Cf. in Prov. 5:15–20 the image of the well relating to the wife. As regards the well as a symbol of (in particular female) fertility, cf. Alter, *Art*, 52, 55; Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 54–55; in addition, Gianni Barbiero, *Song of Songs: A Close Reading*, trans. Michael Tait, VTSup 144 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 218–21, 227–29.

¹⁸ For God as the fountain of life, cf. also Ps. 36:9–10 (35:10 LXX: ὅτι παρὰ σοὶ πηγὴ ζωῆς...). In Isa. 58:11 LXX the people is described: ἔσθι ὡς κήπος μεθύων καὶ ὡς πηγὴ ἣν μὴ ἐξέλιπεν ὕδωρ.

¹⁹ In contrast to v. 9, from v. 11 on she uses this form of address. Note the Johannine irony: While designating Jesus explicitly as a “prophet” (v. 19), at the same time she points to the true identity of the one who can give her τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν.

Isa. 12:3²⁰), he responds with the strange request to call her husband (v. 16). However, following the line of Jeremiah 2–3, where the water symbolism is embedded in the theme of covenant, the breaking of which is portrayed as adultery (Israel serves as example for Judah), the marital theme does not come as a surprise after all. So the five husbands²¹ the Samaritan woman had (John 4:18) may allude to the foreign gods of the five²² nations colonized in Samaria (2 Kgs 17:24–41), and her present husband (negated by her and Jesus) to the current Samaritan cult.²³ That the issue is the true worship of God, which Jesus as prophet (cf. John 4:19) is expected to reveal,²⁴ is shown by her reference to the different places of worship in Samaritan and Jewish tradition (v. 20; hence, this is no change of subject, which it has often been understood to be). But there are some more relevant intertexts offering a deeper level of understanding.

3. A Prophet like Moses?

[253] As noted above, the setting in John 4 establishes intertextual relations to Exod. 2:15–22 (and its, e.g. Philonic, reception); however, the theme of water also recalls more specific Moses traditions. In Exod. 17:1–7 he gives water to the people thirsting in the desert (in v. 2 LXX they urge him: δὸς ἡμῖν ὕδωρ, ἵνα πίωμεν) by bringing forth water out of a rock.²⁵ Like Moses, Jesus gives water to drink, being thus depicted as the expected²⁶ Mosaic prophet. While the Jacob tradition is referred to explicitly, the allusions to Moses arise on a more subtle level.

As prophetic messiah, Jesus meets the Samaritan expectations of an eschatological messianic figure, as they are delineated in John 4. At first, the Samaritan woman

²⁰ LXX: καὶ ἀντλήσετε ὕδωρ μετ' εὐφροσύνης ἐκ τῶν πηγῶν τοῦ σωτηρίου.

²¹ Cf. the Hebrew term *ba'al*.

²² Josephus, *Ant.* 9.288 highlights the number five: ἕκαστοι κατὰ ἔθνος ἴδιον θεὸν εἰς τὴν Σαμάρειαν κομίσαντες (πέντε δ' ἦσαν).

²³ Cf. e.g. Carmichael, “Marriage,” 338n23; Fehribach, *Women*, 65–69; Sandra M. Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 139–40, 145; Theobald, *Evangelium*, 318, 322–23; Jocelyn McWhirter, *The Bridegroom Messiah and the People of God: Marriage in the Fourth Gospel*, SNTSMS 138 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 69–72. Mirjam Zimmermann and Ruben Zimmermann, “Brautwerbung in Samarien? Von der moralischen zur metaphorischen Interpretation von Joh 4,” *ZNT 2* (1998): 40–51; 45–50, connect the comment about her current husband to the context of 3:22–4:42 (i.e., the baptismal “competition”).

²⁴ Cf. Memar Marqah IV:12 about the Taheb as restorer of the true worship (see below).

²⁵ Cf. Num. 20:2–13; in 21:16–18, note the connection with the tradition of a well/φρέαρ. See furthermore the reference in Deut. 8:15 (LXX: τοῦ ἐξαγαγόντος σοι ἐκ πέτρας ἀκροτόμου πηγὴν ὕδατος), followed by the feeding with manna in v. 16. Besides, see the miracle of Marah in Exod. 15:22–26 (cf. also Elisha in 2 Kgs 2:19–22).

²⁶ 1QS IX, 11 refers to the coming of a prophet. 4QTest 5–8 cites Deut. 18:18–19. See also 1 Macc. 4:46; 14:41 (ἕως τοῦ ἀναστῆναι προφήτην πιστόν). For a “messianic” reading of Deut. 18:15, cf. Acts 3:22 (citation also in 7:37).

wonders if he is “greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well,²⁷ and drank of it himself and his children and his cattle”²⁸ (John 4:12). But as the conversation continues, she calls Jesus a prophet (v. 19: θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ). Finally, she invites her people (and the readers) in v. 29: “Come, see a man who told me all the things (cf. v. 25 about the expected [254] Μεσσίας, borrowing Jewish terminology)²⁹ that I have done, is not³⁰ this the messiah (ὁ χριστός)?”³¹

It is difficult to judge from the later sources to what extent the narrative reflects the contemporary Samaritan expectations.³² Given the unique status Moses holds in Samaritan tradition, the basic concept seems to derive from Deuteronomy 18.³³ In Memar Marqah (4th century CE), many features of the Taheb are modeled on Moses’s.³⁴ Once the motif of living water in the history of tradition has been transferred to the Torah,³⁵ the gift of the water by Moses is paralleled to the gift of the Torah. So Memar Marqah VI:3 refers to the Torah as “a well of living water dug³⁶ by a prophet whose like has not arisen from mankind”³⁷ (cf. Deut. 34:10).

²⁷ According to Josephus, *Ant.* 11.341, the Samaritans claimed to be descendants of Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasse. So the Samaritan woman speaks of τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ, ὃς ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν τὸ φρέαρ (in Josh. 24:32 the inheritance of Joseph’s children is founded; cf. Gen. 48). With her reference to οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν worshipping “in this mountain” in v. 20, she points to a chain of tradition beginning with Jacob (cf. Gen. 33:18–20; as a matter of fact, there is a Moses connection as well: the Samaritan Pentateuch identifies the mountain in Deut. 27:4–5 as the Gerizim; cf. also the insertion after the tenth commandment in Exod. 20:14). The importance of Joseph in Samaritan tradition is attested in Memar Marqah IV:12: “There is none like Joseph the king and there is none like Moses the prophet. [...] Moses possessed prophethood, Joseph possessed the Goodly Mount. There is none greater than either of them!” (Quoted from *Memar Marqah: The Teaching of Marqah: The Translation*, ed. and trans. John MacDonald, BZAW 84 [Berlin: Töpelmann, 1963], 186.) Furthermore, the Samaritan woman can call Jacob “our father” because she, the Samaritan, and Jesus, the Jew, share Jacob as a common ancestor.

²⁸ As to the phrase οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ θρέμματα αὐτοῦ, cf. Exod. 17:3.

²⁹ ὅταν ἔλθῃ ἐκεῖνος, ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα. Cf. Memar Marqah III:2: “When the Taheb comes he will reveal the truth...” or IV:12: “The Taheb will come in peace to possess the places of the perfect ones and to manifest the truth” (*Memar Marqah*, trans. MacDonald, 70, 186). Cf. Moses in II:8: “Come in peace, O great prophet Moses, who reveals the truth...” (63).

³⁰ The interrogative particle μήτι does not need to be interpreted as prohibitive in this case. Cf. Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner and Friedrich Rehkopf, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, 17th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), § 427.2n2 (“das muß am Ende doch der Messias sein”); Jean Zumstein, *Das Johannesevangelium*, KEK 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 187.

³¹ Similarly, Jesus’s prophetic knowledge leads to Nathanael’s confession of faith in 1:48–49. Cf. the criterion of the true prophet in Deut. 18:22.

³² See the discussion in Marion Moser, *Schriftdiskurse im Johannesevangelium: Eine narrativ-intertextuelle Analyse am Paradigma von Joh 4 und Joh 7*, WUNT II/380 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 91–96.

³³ The importance of Deuteronomy 18 is attested in the Samaritan Pentateuch, which cites vv. 18–22 after Exod. 20:18. In medieval sources the verse “is clearly applied to the coming of the Taheb” (Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 250; cf. his analysis in 250–253). See also Boismard, *Moses*, 3–4.

³⁴ The relation of the Taheb to Moses as the ultimate prophet is not entirely clear in Samaritan sources.

³⁵ See below for further comment.

³⁶ Cf. Num. 21:18.

³⁷ *Memar Marqah*, trans. MacDonald, 222. Cf. the passage about “the waters” in V:3.

In the Fourth Gospel, though, the christological claim in Jesus's mediating "the gift of God" (John 4:10) goes beyond the Moses tradition³⁸ (see also the [255] "I am"-saying in 4:26,³⁹ where Jesus reveals his messianic identity). While in Num. 21:16 it is explicitly YHWH who gives the water⁴⁰ (LXX: δώσω αὐτοῖς ὕδωρ πιεῖν; cf. YHWH as the fountain of living water in Jer. 2:13), John 4 points to Jesus (v. 14: ὃς δ' ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ...) and so extends the role of the mediator (cf. also 6:32–35).

4. Mediating the Gift of God—in the Role of Wisdom

The water given by Jesus will become *in* the recipient "a well of water springing up to eternal life" (John 4:14: πηγή ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον). A similar imagery is employed by wisdom texts such as Prov. 18:4 (LXX: ὕδωρ βαθύ⁴¹ λόγος ἐν καρδίᾳ ἀνδρός, ποταμὸς δὲ ἀναπηδύει καὶ πηγή ζωῆς). In the sapiential tradition, the teaching (תורה) of the sage is called "a fountain of life" (cf. e.g. Prov. 13:14⁴²).

In Sir. 15:3 Wisdom feeds the god-fearing one who holds fast to the Law (v. 1) with the bread of insight and gives him⁴³ to drink ὕδωρ σοφίας. So she is the one who gives and at the same time the gift (cf. the Johannine Jesus who gives and *is* the bread of life coming down from heaven).⁴⁴ In Sirach 24 the water imagery, interwoven with other metaphoric themes (e.g., garden symbolism), also comprises erotic connotations.⁴⁵ Longing for Wisdom means hunger and [256] thirst that cannot be

³⁸ In this regard, it may be also interesting that the wedding of Cana in John 2 reveals intertextual relations (see, for example, the motif of the "third day") to the Sinai theophany in Exod. 19, where Moses acts as mediator (cf. Olsson, *Structure*, 102–9; Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 2nd ed., HNT 6 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015], 152). In rabbinic tradition, the Sinai covenant (with the gift of the Torah) is interpreted as engagement/wedding of YHWH and Israel (cf. Ruben Zimmermann, *Christologie der Bilder im Johannesevangelium: Die Christopoetik des vierten Evangeliums unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Joh 10*, WUNT 171 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004], 211).

³⁹ Judith E. McKinlay, *Gendering Wisdom the Host: Biblical Invitations to Eat and Drink*, JSOTSup 216 / GCT 4 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 189, points to "a double layer of meaning," distinguishing between the story context and reader associations (see in addition to YHWH also the "I" of Wisdom). When Jesus reveals the name of God (cf. John 17:6), he surpasses Moses as the agent sent from God in Exod. 3:14–15.

⁴⁰ Cf. also Neh. 9:15, 20; Isa. 43:20; 48:21; Ps. 78:15, 16, 20; 105:41; 114:8. *Passivum divinum* in Wis. 11:4.

⁴¹ Cf. John 4:11.

⁴² LXX: νόμος σοφοῦ πηγή ζωῆς. See also Prov. 10:11; 14:27; 16:22; Sir. 21:13. Rabbinic evidence for the metaphoric drinking from the water of a teacher can be found in Str-B 2:436.

⁴³ The masculine pronoun is used here in order to correspond to the gender language in the text, which describes a male-female relationship between the one seeking Wisdom and Wisdom herself. In Sir. 15:2 Wisdom is pictured as his mother or his young wife.

⁴⁴ See John 6:31–58.

⁴⁵ Cf. Carmichael, "Marriage," 335n12: "the metaphorical use of water in regard to Wisdom owes much to its related and prior use in regard to women." As to the intertextuality with the Song of Sol., cf., for

satisfied. The one who drinks her will thirst for more (v. 21: οἱ πίνοντές με ἔτι διψήσουσιν; cf. John 4:13 about the water from the well of Jacob: πᾶς ὁ πίνων ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος τούτου διψήσει πάλιν), whereas whoever drinks of the water Jesus gives will never thirst again (John 4:14: οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; cf. 6:35). After the identification of Wisdom with the Mosaic Torah in Sir. 24:23 (νόμον ὃν ἐνετείλατο ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς), the water symbolism is developed further in the imagery evoking, on the one hand, the rivers watering the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10–14) and, on the other, the tradition of the fountain coming forth from the temple,⁴⁶ which in Ezekiel 47 grows to a river with life-giving water.

This strand of tradition that transfers the water imagery to (the) הַרְוָה seems to be widely known (and is broadly received in rabbinic exegesis). Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is evidence for the symbolism of the Torah as the well of living water in the Damascus Document (see e.g., the allegorical reading of Num. 21:18 in CD VI 3–11⁴⁷, decoding the well as the Law in VI 4).⁴⁸ Philo associates several wells in biblical stories with wisdom (cf. *Ebr.* 112–113: Num. 21:17–18; σοφίαν...ἦν ἀπεικάζει φρέατι; *Post.* 136–138 and *Fug.* 195: Gen. 24:16).⁴⁹

Following the sapiential tradition, the motif of living water in John 4 can be interpreted as pointing, on the one hand, to the wise teaching of Jesus (as eschatological הַרְוָה), who, on the other hand, is presented from the beginning as incarnated Wisdom. Against the foil of Sirach 24, Wisdom as well as the water imagery are not confined to the Mosaic Torah. According to John 1:17, the Law was given through Moses (cf. also 7:19), whereas Jesus conveys—not to [257] be understood as its substitution⁵⁰—ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια⁵¹ (cf. 1:14, referring to the

example, Nuria Calduch-Benages, “Ben Sira 24:22 – Decoding a Metaphor,” in *Vermittelte Gegenwart: Konzeptionen der Gottespräsenz von der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels bis Anfang des 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr.*, ed. Andrea Taschl-Erber and Irmtraud Fischer, WUNT 367 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 57–72 (62–66). Cf. also the love imagery in the Fourth Gospel.

⁴⁶ See discussion below.

⁴⁷ CD VI, 11 points to an eschatological figure teaching righteousness (using the language of Hos. 10:12). As to the “interpreter of the Torah” in VI, 7, cf. VII, 18–19 (citing Num. 24:17); 4QFlor I, 11. Regarding the concept of Torah, see e.g. Heinz-Josef Fabry, “Der Umgang mit der kanonisierten Tora in Qumran,” in *Die Tora als Kanon für Juden und Christen*, ed. Erich Zenger, HBSt 10 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1996), 293–327; Hindy Najman, *Seconding Sinai: The Development of Mosaic Discourse in Second Temple Judaism*, JSJS 77 (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Susanne Gillmayr-Bucher and Maria Häußl (ed.), *Ḥadaqa and Torah in Postexilic Discourse*, LHB 640 (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017). In CD I, 11 the raising of the “teacher of righteousness” evokes Deut. 18:18 (in 1QpHab II, 2–3 also described in categories of Deut. 18; cf. furthermore Num. 12:8).

⁴⁸ Cf. also CD-A III, 16; CD-B XIX, 34.

⁴⁹ Cf. also *Somn.* 1.6 (Gen. 28:10; σύμβολον εἶναι τὸ φρέαρ ἐπιστήμης); 2.271 (Num. 21:17).

⁵⁰ Cf. Schapdick, “Autorität,” 202: “Der göttliche Vermittlungsakt des Gesetzes durch Mose wird klar bestätigt [...]” Lindemann, “Mose,” 308, underlines the continuity, in contrast to an antithesis.

⁵¹ Cf. מִן הַקֶּדֶשׁ in Exod. 34:6 (of YHWH). In Exod. 33:18 Moses asks to see the glory of God, but his wish is only partly fulfilled (see, in contrast, John 1:14; cf. 12:45; 14:9); John 1:18 states: “no one has ever seen God” (but see 6:46).

δόξα of the λόγος; ἀλήθεια occurs again in 4:23–24⁵²); he is the true exegete of God (cf. 1:18). Receiving his revelation satisfies the thirst definitively. Thus, in Proverbs and Ben Sira, Wisdom speaks as prophetic mediator of the divine Word⁵³ and so connects prophetic and sapiential tradition, and similarly in the Fourth Gospel, it is Jesus who is the Logos incarnate.

5. True Worship—in Spirit

In John 4:20 the theological discussion shifts to the place of worship: Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem? If we consider the tradition of the fountain or “living water” flowing out from the temple in Jerusalem,⁵⁴ the whole composition proves to be determined by the major theme of water.

The emphatic pronomina “we” and “you” in 4:20 and 22 signal the differing group identities, which ought to be transcended by οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταί who worship the Father “in spirit and truth” (4:23–24: ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ).⁵⁵ The hope for the reunion of the people of God in a new/everlasting covenant that is expressed in Jer. 31:31–34 (see also Jer. 3:18) and Ezek. 37:15–28 becomes present reality (John 4:23, νῦν). At the end of the story, the people of Sychar, whose representative function⁵⁶ is indicated by the designation οἱ Σαμαρῖται (John 4:40), even adopt a universal perspective: οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου (v. 42).⁵⁷

True worship of God is now to be rendered “neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem” (4:21). The dichotomy is transcended by stressing that worship [258] is not contingent on a physical location claiming to mediate God’s presence (cf. the skepticism regarding the temple in 1 Kgs 8:27; Isa. 66:1), but “is a matter of spirit and truth,”⁵⁸ since “God is spirit” (v. 24). The invisible God’s presence is revealed through Jesus.⁵⁹ In the farewell discourses, he promises to send the Paraclete, who is

⁵² As to the key term ἀλήθεια, which constitutes the true prophet, see also, for example, 8:40, 45–46; 16:7; 17:17; 18:37. In 14:6 Jesus *is* ἡ ἀλήθεια.

⁵³ See her presentation in Prov. 1:20–21 and 8:1–3 like a prophetess, and her coming from the mouth of the Most High in Sir. 24:3 (on this, cf. Isa. 45:23; 48:3; 55:11; Ps. 147:15, 18–19).

⁵⁴ Cf. Ezekiel 47; Joel 4:18 LXX: καὶ πηγὴ ἐξ οἴκου κυρίου ἐξελεύσεται; Zech. 14:8 LXX: καὶ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐξελεύσεται ὕδωρ ζῶν ἐξ Ἱερουσαλήμ; Ps. 36:9; 46:5; Sir. 24:25–31; Rev. 22:1–2.

⁵⁵ The keyword προσκυνέω (9x in vv. 20–24) occurs also in 2 Kgs 17:35–36 (προσκυνήσετε in 4 Kgdms 17:35–36 as in John 4:21). As to ἐν...ἀληθείᾳ, see Ps. 145:18 (144:18 LXX).

⁵⁶ Cf. Theobald, *Evangelium*, 306, 308.

⁵⁷ This conforms to the universalism of Prov. 8:32, in contrast to the Zion-related reinterpretation of Sirach 24 (cf. Baruch 3–4).

⁵⁸ Andreas Köstenberger, “The Destruction of the Second Temple and the Composition of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman, WUNT II/219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 69–108 (102).

⁵⁹ See e.g. Jörg Frey, “‘Wer mich sieht, der sieht den Vater’: Jesus als Bild Gottes im Johannesevangelium,” in *Vermittelte Gegenwart: Konzeptionen der Gottespräsenz von der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels*

called τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀλήθειας (14:17; 15:26; 16:13) and will be ἐν ὑμῖν (14:17; cf. Ezek. 36:26–27; 37:14).⁶⁰

As the key term πνεῦμα indicates, the water symbolism also refers to the (gift of the) spirit, especially in the larger context of the first chapters of the Fourth Gospel. When the theme of water is first introduced in John 1 with John the Baptist, he distinguishes his baptism ἐν ὕδατι (1:26, 31, 33) from Jesus’s baptizing ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (v. 33). In Jesus’s conversation with Nicodemus, water and spirit appear in close connection (3:5: εἰ μὴ τις γεννηθῆ ἔξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος).⁶¹ Directly before Jesus’s encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, the motif of competition with the Baptist emerges again (3:22–4:3; as to the keyword “water,” see 3:23). Focusing on τὸ πνεῦμα, John 4:23–24 follows 1:32–33; 3:5–8, 34. Finally, in 7:39 the living water is identified with the spirit.

A metaphorical blending of water and spirit already occurs in Isa. 44:3, where the gift of water is paralleled to the gift of the spirit (LXX: δώσω ὕδωρ / ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου),⁶² or in the *outpouring* of the spirit in Ezek. 39:29 (upon the house of Israel); Joel 3:1–2 (upon all flesh to be inspired to prophesy); Zech. 12:10 (upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem). Ezekiel 36:25–27 links the motifs of cleansing water (cf. Zech. 13:1) and God’s spirit (36:26–27 LXX: πνεῦμα καινὸν / τὸ πνεῦμά μου δώσω ἐν ὑμῖν),⁶³ the gift of the spirit will make Israel follow God’s commandments. In Prov. 1:23 Wisdom proclaims to pour out *her* spirit (and to make known *her* words). Endowment with the spirit is closely associated with prophetic mission.⁶⁴ Sometimes prophetic [259] and sapiential elements converge: In Isa. 11:2 God’s spirit resting upon the Messiah is described as πνεῦμα σοφίας.⁶⁵

B. John 7

1. Water Symbolism of *Sukkot*

In John 7 Jesus has moved to the spatial center of Jewish belief: At the feast of Tabernacles he teaches in the temple (vv. 14–44). *Sukkot* commemorates Israel’s wanderings in the desert, including the miraculous provision of water, and

bis Anfang des 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr., ed. Andrea Taschl-Erber and Irmtraud Fischer, WUNT 367 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 179–208.

⁶⁰ Cf. also 1QS IV, 19–22.

⁶¹ Cf. 1 Cor. 12:3 (related to baptism): πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν.

⁶² Cf. also the metaphorical interaction in Isa. 32:15.

⁶³ Cf. 1QS IV, 21.

⁶⁴ Cf. Irmtraud Fischer and Christoph Heil, “Geistbegabung als Beauftragung für Ämter und Funktionen: Eine gesamtbiblische Perspektive,” *JBTh* 24 (2009): 53–92 (61–68).

⁶⁵ As to מְחִיבֵי הַיָּדָיִם, cf. e.g. also Deut. 34:9. Even closer is the relation of spirit and wisdom in Wis. 1:6 (φιλόανθρωπον γὰρ πνεῦμα σοφία); 7:7 (πνεῦμα σοφίας); 7:22 (ἐν αὐτῇ πνεῦμα); cf. the parallelization in 9:17.

anticipates the hoped-for future blessings. So the “theme of water is evoked in both its dimensions of remembrance and anticipation”⁶⁶ of eschatological expectations. A central element of the feast providing the background of the Johannine narrative is the daily ritual of drawing water from the fountain of Gihon, which at the altar of burnt offerings in front of the temple is poured into a silver funnel, flowing from there into the ground. This should guarantee the life-bringing rain (cf. Zech. 14:16–19).⁶⁷

The symbolic context of the ritual, presupposed in John 7, is reflected in rabbinic sources. The ceremony of the water-drawing that is documented in m. Sukkah 4:9–10 is linked in y. Sukkah 5:1 with the outpouring of the spirit, thereby quoting Isa. 12:3, where Israel is promised to “draw water from the wells of salvation”.⁶⁸ T. Sukkah 3:3–10 refers to the tradition of the life-giving water flowing from below the temple in Ezekiel 47; Zech. 13:1; 14:8⁶⁹, while 3:11 mentions the tradition of the wandering well in the desert.⁷⁰ The setting in John 7 [260] points to the fulfillment of the festival symbolism and the temple-related⁷¹ messianic predictions in Jesus as the true source of the water of life.⁷²

2. Rivers of Living Water

Embedded in scenes which display (life-threatening)⁷³ controversies about the question of who he really is, the narrative in John 7 gives some clues about the identity of the Johannine Jesus. In 7:16–18, Jesus legitimates the authority of his διδασχῆ by attributing it to God who has sent him (cf. also 7:28–29, 33),⁷⁴ thereby presenting himself as (the) prophet in the succession of Moses who shall speak all that God commands him, as depicted in Deut. 18:18 (cf. Jer. 1:7, 9, and John 12:49–

⁶⁶ Richard Bauckham, “Messianism according to the Gospel of John,” in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*, ed. John Lierman, WUNT II/219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 34–68 (48, 50).

⁶⁷ Zech. 14:21 is alluded to in John 2:16.

⁶⁸ Gen. Rab. 70.8.3, which reads Gen. 29:2–3 in the light of the temple celebration of Tabernacles (among other interpretations), employs the image of “drinking of the spirit”.

⁶⁹ Cf. also b. Meg. 31a.

⁷⁰ Cf. also Aileen Guilding, *The Fourth Gospel and Jewish Worship: A Study of the Relation of St. John’s Gospel to the Ancient Jewish Lectionary System* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 2, 92–94, 105–106.

⁷¹ 1 Kgs 8 attests a close relation of *Sukkot* to the temple.

⁷² Cf. Köstenberger, “Destruction,” 91. He thinks of a coping strategy responding to the loss of the temple as the central symbol of religious identity and God’s presence with his people. Cf. also Zimmermann, *Christologie*, 149–53.

⁷³ Cf. vv. 1, 19–20, 25, 30, 32, 44. According to Deut. 18:20, the false prophet should be put to death (cf. 13:2–6). Against this, Jesus’s fate is depicted as standing in the line of the rejected-prophet tradition.

⁷⁴ The motif of sending combines prophetic (see e.g. Exod. 3:12–15; Num. 16:28; Isa. 6:8; Jer. 1:7; Zech. 12:12–15) and Wisdom traditions (cf. Wis. 9:10). The use of the sending formula in conjunction with “father” / “son” language indicates, though, an intimacy beyond prophetic mission.

50).⁷⁵ As “prophet like Moses” he argues the true⁷⁶ interpretation of the Law given by—or, according to 1:17, through—Moses (7:19–24; demonstrated in the halachic justification of the healing on the Sabbath).⁷⁷ After this, there follows a debate about his messiahship.

[261] When Jesus exclaims on the “last” (presumably seventh⁷⁸), climactic day of the feast of Tabernacles (7:37: ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς), at the height of the solemn ceremony: εἰάν τις διψᾷ ἐρχέσθω πρός με καὶ πινέτω, his words recall Isa. 55:1 as well as Prov. 9:5; Sir. 24:19.⁷⁹ Like the prophet as God’s mouth-piece or Wisdom (or the sage in Sir. 51:23–24), Jesus invites those who are thirsty to come to him. The picture of Jesus *standing* in the midst of the people and mediating the divine word puts him, on the one hand, into the role of the Mosaic prophet commissioned by God, to whom they shall listen (cf. Deut. 18:15–19). On the other hand, acting in the role of personified Wisdom,⁸⁰ his teaching indicates more explicitly its heavenly origin.

The quotation in 7:38 (καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή), without a clearly assignable source,⁸¹ could be inspired by the sapiential literature, too. In this verse, the theme of “living water” appears again, expanded with the motif of rivers flowing from “his

⁷⁵ Cf. furthermore Exod. 4:12 and Num. 16:28 with John 8:28–29 (John 8:29 also evokes Exod. 3:12 which is alluded to in John 3:2); 14:10, 24; 17:8, 14. A contrastive foil is provided by the voice of “some of the Pharisees” (9:16; from 9:18 οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι) in John 9:29: ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι Μωϋσεῖ λελάληκεν ὁ θεός, τοῦτον δὲ οὐκ οἶδαμεν πόθεν ἐστίν. An essential aspect of Moses as true, paradigmatic prophet is his direct contact to God (cf. Exod. 33:11; 34:5–6, 29–35; Num. 12:8; Deut. 5:4–5; 34:10). However, his intimate relationship with God is exceeded by the μονογενῆς in John 1:18 (cf. 6:46; furthermore, 3:13–15: v. 13 may reflect the tradition of Moses’s heavenly ascent).

⁷⁶ Cf. his qualification as ἀληθής in 7:18 (as ὁ πέμψας με is ἀληθινός in v. 28) and the key term ἀλήθεια throughout the Gospel. The criterion is τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ποιεῖν (v. 17; in Wis. 9:9–10 Wisdom communicates that is pleasing to God). So his opponents should come to a “just judgement” (v. 24).

⁷⁷ Cf. the summary of the prophetic office in Fischer, “Prophetieverständnis,” 154: “Mittleramt in der Nachfolge des Mose, vermittelt/aktualisiert die Tora.” The Mosaic Torah remains the valid basis of reference for his teaching. Cf. Zumstein, *Johannesevangelium*, 297, referring to the perfect form δέδωκεν in 7:22: “Diese Gabe ist nicht hinfällig geworden, sondern behält ihre volle Gültigkeit.” (Cf. furthermore Wengst, *Johannesevangelium*, 291; Lindemann, “Mose,” 300; Schapdick, “Autorität,” 205.) See also Moses’s function as witness in 5:45–47 (cf. 1:45): In this context, the true disciple of Moses, or of the Torah (cf. 5:39), is understood to be Jesus’s disciple (in contrast to establishing anti-thetic alternatives, as reflected in 9:28).

⁷⁸ Cf. Str-B 2:490–91; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar zu Kap. 5–12*, 4th ed., HThKNT 4/2 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1985), 211; Wengst, *Johannesevangelium*, 302.

⁷⁹ See also Rev. 22:17 (ὁ διψῶν ἐρχέσθω); cf. 21:6; furthermore, 1 En. 48:1 (see below).

⁸⁰ Cf. Theobald, *Evangelium*, 537: Jesus speaks “*in persona sapientiae*.” As to his standing and crying, cf. also Prov. 8:1–3 where Wisdom appears as a prophetess speaking in the public (cf. 1:20–21; Sir. 24:1–2). John 7:34 takes up the widespread biblical motif of seeking and finding which is transferred to Wisdom in Prov. 1:28; 8:35–36.

⁸¹ For possible reference texts, as well as parallels in the Dead Sea Scrolls, see e.g. Edwin D. Freed, *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John*, NovTSup 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1965), 21–38. Reim, *Jochanan*, 70–88, refers to Isa. 28:16 (cf. 1 Pet. 2:4). In tracking the source for the scriptural reference, the best solution may be to think of a combination of motifs and themes that are reflected in several intertexts. For such a “composite” background of John 7:38, see also Brown, *Gospel*, 323.

innermost” (ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥεύσουσιν ὕδατος ζωῆς), which evokes the already quoted passage in Prov. 18:4.⁸² Who is the source of the “rivers of living water”: who is meant by αὐτοῦ?⁸³ The correspondence [262] with the imagery in John 4:14 seems to point to the believer,⁸⁴ but the pronoun could also—especially in this context—refer to the wise teacher.⁸⁵

In Ps. 78:15–16, 20 the motif of flowing ποταμοί is linked to the tradition of the miraculous gift of water out of the rock⁸⁶ (cf. Ps. 105:41⁸⁷). In the course of the Gospel narrative, Psalm 78 has already been cited in John 6:31 (see Ps. 77:24 LXX). These intertexts (Pss. 78 and 105) lead back to the festival symbolism, which in turn connects the remembrance of the events of salvation history with eschatological expectations, such as those reflected in the tradition of the river of life-giving water flowing from the rock underneath the temple.⁸⁸ In the Fourth Gospel, the metaphors of the eschatological temple are transferred to Jesus (cf. explicitly John 2:21), who is the new center of gravity of eschatological hopes. The rivers of living water are flowing out of *him*, who is (like Wisdom) the wise teacher sent from above.⁸⁹

In this regard, it is interesting to have another look at Sirach 24, where a similar combination of the motifs temple, water, and Torah can be found. Here the motif of the river with living water flowing out from Jerusalem is transferred to Wisdom/Torah, or wise teaching.⁹⁰ At first, Torah, filled with [263] wisdom (so there is no exact

⁸² LXX: ὕδωρ βαθὺ λόγος ἐν καρδίᾳ ἀνδρός, ποταμὸς δὲ ἀναπηδῶει καὶ πηγὴ ζωῆς.

⁸³ For the history of exegetical discussion, cf. e.g. Brown, *Gospel*, 320–21; Schnackenburg, *Johannesevangelium*, 212–13; Theobald, *Evangelium*, 537–38.

⁸⁴ See the arguments put forth by Reim, *Jochanan*, 56–70. C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1967), 271, seems to harmonize the alternatives: “Christ is himself the fountain of living water, but it is a valid inference that the believer, being joined to him, is also, in a secondary way, a source of living water.” Cf. the image of the well with living water flowing on all sides (= generating disciples) in Sifre Deut. 11:22 (84a).

⁸⁵ In addition, transferring the ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ to the one who drinks (from them), does not suit the image here (cf. also Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, KEK 2, 14th ed. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1956], 228n6). For a christological interpretation, it is not necessary to think of 19:34 (cf. 1 John 5:7–8) immediately.

⁸⁶ See Ps. 77:15–16 LXX: διέρρηξεν πέτραν ἐν ἐρήμῳ καὶ ἐπότισεν αὐτοὺς ὡς ἐν ἀβύσσῳ πολλῇ καὶ ἐξήγαγεν ὕδωρ ἐκ πέτρας καὶ κατήγαγεν ὡς ποταμοὺς ὕδατα; v. 20: ἐπεὶ ἐπάταξεν πέτραν καὶ ἐρρύησαν ὕδατα καὶ χεῖμαρροι κατεκλύσθησαν.

⁸⁷ Ps. 104:41 LXX: διέρρηξεν πέτραν, καὶ ἐρρύησαν ὕδατα, ἐπορεύθησαν ἐν ἀνύδροις ποταμοί. Cf. furthermore Isa. 43:20 LXX: ἔδωκα ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὕδωρ καὶ ποταμοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀνύδρῳ ποτίσαι τὸ γένος μου τὸ ἐκλεκτόν.

⁸⁸ See above. Cf. also Rev. 22:1: ποταμὸν ὕδατος ζωῆς...ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἄρνιου.

⁸⁹ In 1 Cor. 10:4 Christ is explicitly identified with the rock.

⁹⁰ Cf. Beate Ego, “Der Strom der Tora: Zur Rezeption eines tempeltheologischen Motivs in frühjüdischer Zeit,” in *Gemeinde ohne Tempel / Community without Temple: Zur Substituierung und Transformation des Jerusalemer Tempels und seines Kults im Alten Testament, antiken Judentum und frühen Christentum*, ed. Beate Ego, Armin Lange, and Peter Pilhofer, WUNT 118 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 205–14 (209).

identity), is compared to rivers full of water (24:25–29), which allude to the rivers of Paradise (Gen. 2:10–14). Then the sage himself is portrayed ὡς διῶρυξ ἀπὸ ποταμοῦ (Sir. 24:30) watering the garden (24:31), thereby growing to a river,⁹¹ and pouring out teaching like prophecy (24:33: διδασκαλίαν ὡς προφητείαν ἐκχεῶ). As the imagery is transferred to him, he seems to “embody” Wisdom. With Torah and teaching as the water of life, the basis for a future community without temple is laid.⁹²

Transcending the narrated teaching situation, John 7:39, on the other hand, explains that Jesus speaks of the spirit (cf. y. Sukkah 5:1). As a “parenthetical comment”⁹³ on a meta-level of the story, it refers to the sending of the Paraclete (narratively realized in John 20:22).⁹⁴ Now the underlying metaphorical blending of water and spirit (which is inherited from tradition; cf. e.g. Isa. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 36:25–27; 39:29; Joel 3:1–2; Zech. 12:10) is decoded explicitly. The reference to the πνεῦμα puts Jesus’s teaching in the frame of messianic hopes linked to the gift of the spirit. It also recalls the spiritualization of the temple theme in John 4:23–24.

3. The Prophet / the Messiah?

Jesus’s words are interpreted by his audience on the story level in another way. The following debate reflects the popular expectations of “the prophet” (John 7:40: οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης) and “the messiah” (7:41: οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός).⁹⁵ The question of Jesus’s messiahship has already arisen in 7:26. Criteria established in these controversies are (a) the provenance of the messiah (7:27–29: as to the putative knowledge about Jesus,⁹⁶ see the irony regarding his heavenly origin as hidden messiah,⁹⁷ 7:41–42: Davidic descent, Bethlehem), or of the⁹⁸ [264] prophet (7:52: not

⁹¹ Cf. the “spring of living water”, related to the teacher, in 1QH XVI (= VIII), 16–23.

⁹² Cf. Ego, “Strom,” 212. See also the “house” of teaching in Sir. 51:3.

⁹³ Brown, *Gospel*, 324.

⁹⁴ See Zimmermann, *Christologie*, 152–53, for the “Horizontverschmelzung der Zeiten” (153).

⁹⁵ The same titles appear in 1:20–21, 25, addressed to John the Baptist, who rejects them.

⁹⁶ Cf. also John 6:42; 8:14; 9:29–33.

⁹⁷ Theobald, *Evangelium*, 505, shows the correspondence of Christology and scenic dramaturgy: “Wenn Jesus sich in den ‘Weisheitsworten’ 7,33f. und 37f. als die leibhaftige ‘Weisheit’ präsentiert, die aus der Verborgenheit Gottes zur festgesetzten Zeit hervortritt, um den Ort ihres Auftritts nach einer ‘kleinen Weile’ (7,33b) wieder zu verlassen (vgl. 33c.d; dann v.a. 8,59c.d), dann hat diese Weisheitschristologie in Joh 7 ihr genaues szenisches Pendant: Jesu überraschendes Hervortreten aus seiner Verborgenheit in der Mitte des Festes dient ihrer narrativen Veranschaulichung.”

⁹⁸ Cf. p⁶⁶.

messianic traditions (as to his designation “the light of the nations”, cf. e.g. Isa. 42:6; 49:6¹⁰⁶).

(6) For this (reason) he was chosen and hidden in his presence,
before the world was created and forever.

(7) And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits has revealed him to the holy and the righteous;
for he has preserved the lot of the righteous. [...]

The “kings of the earth” and “the strong” (1 En. 48:9) “will fall” (48:10),

For they have denied the Lord of Spirits and his Anointed One.¹⁰⁷

Blessed be the name of the Lord of Spirits.

(49:1) For wisdom has been poured out like water [...].

(2) [...] For the Chosen One has taken his stand in the presence of the Lord of Spirits;
and his glory is forever and ever,
and his might, to all generations.

(3) And in him dwell the spirit of wisdom and the spirit of insight [...].

In this set of eschatological expectations, the outpouring of wisdom¹⁰⁸ (like the spirit) is linked to the revelation of the Chosen and Anointed One in his might and glory, in whom dwells the “spirit of wisdom” (cf. Isa. 11:2; here resting on the messianic figure).¹⁰⁹ The repeated connection shows that his relationship with Wisdom seems to be very close (up to an indwelling; but there is no identification).

1 Enoch 48–49 may illuminate some of the background of messianic ideas that is presupposed in the Fourth Gospel’s water symbolism. With its [266] messianology merging different strands of tradition, it can provide an explanation why the people in John 7:41 conclude from Jesus’s proclamation in vv. 37–38 that he is the *messiah* (cf. the Samaritan woman in 4:29 after their conversation about the living water).

D. Conclusion

The Fourth Gospel’s narration works on several levels. While the voices of the people seem to reflect contemporary Samaritan (where the Davidic messianology hardly plays a part) and Jewish expectations of “messianic” figures, these popular notions are transformed and transcended by the voices of Jesus and of the narrator,

¹⁰⁶ The “servant” of Deutero-Isaiah who suffers the fate of the rejected prophet features prophetic traits as well.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Ps. 2:2.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Sir. 1:9.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. John 1:31–34.

integrating the concept of a prophetic messiah, or prophetic mediator,¹¹⁰ into the frame of Johannine Christology.¹¹¹

Since the prophet *par excellence* in Jewish tradition is Moses, speaking of “the prophet” most likely refers to the expectation of a Mosaic figure coined by Deut. 18:15–19; 34:10–12.¹¹² The gift of the water establishes a subtle parallelism with Moses on two levels. On the one hand, it recalls the Exodus tradition (Moses providing water out of the rock), the paradigm of salvation. On the other hand, it refers to the gift of the Torah, to which the imagery of life-giving water is transferred in Second Temple literature. As Moses gives the Law,¹¹³ Jesus gives the water of life by communicating the true understanding [267] of God’s will and word, in correspondence to the promised eschatological outpouring of the spirit.¹¹⁴

The primary task of a prophet is to transmit the word of God and to interpret it for the respective time. In this regard, the Johannine Jesus’s claim to reveal God’s definitive word is authorized from the beginning, since he is introduced into the Gospel’s story as the incarnated Logos conveying God’s gift of ζῳή. As such, he reflects traditions about Wisdom, who is also depicted as heavenly teacher and prophetess.¹¹⁵ When in 1 Enoch 48–49 the outpouring of wisdom marks the revelation of the messiah, this further illustrates the association of water imagery and messianic hopes. Differently to the temple-centered symbolism of *Sukkot*, or to the transfer of the metaphors of live-giving water to the Torah, the focus here and in the Fourth Gospel is on a pre-existent messianic figure in whom dwells the spirit of wisdom.

¹¹⁰ As regards Moses, cf. Deut. 5:5.

¹¹¹ The prophetic or Mosaic pattern in Johannine Christology is stressed by Meeks, *Prophet-King*; Reim, *Jochanan*, 114–129; Lierman, “Pattern.” Sukmin Cho, *Jesus as Prophet in the Fourth Gospel*, NTMon 15 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006), 274–84, assumes a didactic and apologetic function of the prophetic concept. As to the current skepticism regarding reconstructions of a Johannine development from low to high Christology, see Frey, “Jesus als Bild Gottes,” 190–96. With Adele Reinhartz, “Jesus as Prophet: Predictive Prolepses in the Fourth Gospel,” *JSNT* 36 (1989): 3–16 (10), the prophet Christology in the Fourth Gospel can in short be rated as follows: “The Johannine Jesus is not only the prophet, but the prophesied, not only the mouthpiece for the divine word but the content of the message itself.”

¹¹² For more prophetic features and roles related to the Johannine Jesus (setting him in parallel not only with Moses) see Cho, *Jesus as Prophet*. In John 1:21, 25 ὁ προφήτης is distinguished from Elijah.

¹¹³ As to the phrasing in John 7:19, cf. the customary designation of Moses as “lawgiver”.

¹¹⁴ As to the gift of the spirit, cf. the mediatory role of Moses in Numbers 11, where God takes some of the spirit that is on Moses and bestows it on 70 elders (cf. vv. 17, 25–29).

¹¹⁵ The Johannine Christology stands in the tradition of Sirach 24, where a similar theological linking of originally independent traditions can be found. On the gender dynamics in the texts, see McKinlay, *Gendering Wisdom*.

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