

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

ECHOES OF CREATION AND SALVATION BY THE TRIUNE GOD IN JOHN 9

A Thesis Submitted

to the Faculty of the Rawlings School of Divinity

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Biblical Languages

by

Jungeun Lee

Lynchburg, Virginia

August 2023

Thank you, Jesus, my Lord and Savior

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The initial idea of this thesis traces back to my Bible study with Dr. Mark Yoon nearly a decade ago. His teaching of reading the Gospel of John through the lens of the “relationship” within the Triune God transformed my spiritual relationship with God. I am deeply grateful to him for opening my eyes to this perspective.

More recently, this thesis idea took shape during a Group Bible Study with students at Boston UBF Church. While studying the first half of the Gospel of John during the fall semester of 2022-23, I found that John 9 is one of the most challenging passages due to a lack of consensus among scholars regarding its interpretation, which led me to undertake this thesis. I extend my sincere appreciation to all my coworkers and fellow students at Boston UBF Church for their contributions in making this thesis possible.

I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Benjamin Laird, my thesis mentor, whose guidance and support were instrumental throughout the past two semesters as I worked on this thesis. Additionally, my thanks go to Dr. Leo Percer, thesis reader, for his insights and feedback during the thesis defense period. I’d also like to thank Dr. Carol Thomas and Dr. Gary Yates for shaping my understanding of Biblical hermeneutics and Hebrew exegesis.

I would like to give my heartfelt thanks to my parents, and my younger sister, who have consistently loved, encouraged, and supported me throughout my life. I also wish to express my appreciation to my parents-in-law for their unwavering support through their love and prayers.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank my wife, Jihye, and my daughter, Dayoung. Words cannot fully express the depth of my gratitude and love for you both. I can only echo Jesus’ word to confess my love. “You are in me and I am in you” (John 14:20b)

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to solve the enigmatic narrative of Jesus' healing of a man blind from birth at Siloam in the Gospel of John 9, with a particular focus on verses 6–7. Within the context of intertextual connections, this story resonates with numerous narrative patterns and echoes found throughout the Bible. These intertextual connections provide important keys for interpreting this passage. By discerning the intertextual connections between this narrative and other parts of the Bible, readers will gain insight into the broader themes of Creation, Salvation, and the Trinity that are interwoven into this story. It means that this passage is not merely a standalone chapter within the Gospel of John but a vessel for conveying the profound themes that permeate the entire book of John, the Johannine literature, the New Testament, and even the entirety of the Bible. Through this interconnectedness, it becomes evident that the Bible delivers a unified message about Jesus.

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| I. THE ECHO OF CREATION IN THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH IN JOHN 9 | 5 |
| Echoes of Genesis 1 in the Johannine Literature | 5 |
| The Theme of Beginning | 6 |
| The Theme of Darkness and Light..... | 8 |
| The Theme of Good and Glory | 12 |
| The Creation Themes of Genesis 1 in John 9 | 16 |
| Echoes of the Creation Narrative in John 9 | 16 |
| Darkness in the Beginning vs. Blind from Birth..... | 18 |
| II. THE ECHO OF SALVATION IN THE POOL OF SILOAM | 20 |
| The Materials for “Born Again” in John 9..... | 21 |
| Water Imagery | 22 |
| Water Imagery in Genesis 1 and 2..... | 23 |
| Water Imagery in the Gospel of John | 26 |
| The Meaning of “Siloam” (Σιλωάμ)..... | 31 |
| The Historical and Etymological Analysis of Siloam..... | 33 |
| The Literary Analysis of Siloam..... | 33 |
| Water and the Spirit | 35 |

| | |
|---|----|
| III. THE ECHO OF THE TRIUNE GOD THROUGH HIS WORK AT SILOAM | 37 |
| Jesus' Work as God the Creator at Siloam | 37 |
| The Threefold Meaning of "Siloam" for the Triune God..... | 39 |
| The Father <i>Sent</i> the Son | 40 |
| The Father <i>Sent</i> the Spirit | 41 |
| The Son <i>Sent</i> the Spirit | 42 |
| The Triune God and His Witness..... | 42 |
| A Witness <i>Sent</i> from God | 43 |
| Anoint (ἐπιχρίω) | 44 |
| "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι)..... | 47 |
| The Image of the Triune God in His Witness | 48 |
| CONCLUSION | 50 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 53 |

INTRODUCTION

Jesus' miraculous healing of a blind man in John 9 presents numerous avenues for interpretation. Particularly in verses 6–7, the central elements of the healing, such as the pool of Siloam, have been at the center of debate. One of the church fathers, Irenaeus, interpreted Jesus' putting mud with his saliva on the blind man's eyes in verse 6 as a mirror image of the work of God in creation (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.15.2). In support of this viewpoint, Ramsey Michaels commented, "Many centuries have passed, yet no better interpretation of the verse has been offered."¹ It is just one of the many interpretational issues scholars have debated for centuries concerning this passage.

The complexity of interpreting this passage arises partly from its connection to Jesus' prophetic identity. In the Old Testament, prophets conveyed messages not only through their words but also through their actions. They served as bearers of God's message, foretold future events, discerned others' thoughts, and performed miracles, often laden with prophetic symbolism.² Jesus seamlessly continued this prophetic tradition by delivering God's ultimate message as the final Prophet.³ Therefore, it becomes crucial for us to closely examine all of his words and actions to grasp the profound layers of prophetic symbolism.

¹ J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 546.

² Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 177-79.

³ "The authority of Jesus transcends that of all the prophets who preceded him... Jesus is God's final prophet, but he is more than a prophet." See Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*, 179.

There are many other questions that still have not been completely resolved. What is the significance of opening the eyes of the man blind “from birth”? Why did Jesus instruct the man to wash in the pool of Siloam instead of simply using spoken words, as he did in many other healing instances? Furthermore, what was the mechanism through which “Siloam” facilitated the healing of the blind man?

In order to solve the conundrums of the passage, this thesis adopts a method that examines the intertextual connections among various texts within the Scriptures.⁴ Despite being penned by different authors over centuries, the Scriptures convey a unified message about Jesus. These disparate books are linked and harmonized through intertextual bonds encompassing quotations, allusions, and echoes.⁵ Therefore, intertextual connections serve as a pivotal mechanism through which the Scriptures articulate a unified message.

Discerning these echoes entails more than merely tracing the literal sense of the text; it necessitates an exploration of the diverse literary devices employed by biblical authors. These authors fashion their intended meanings by utilizing literary devices that encompass imagery,

⁴ The term “intertextuality” in biblical studies is typically used differently than in postmodern literary studies, where it entails the reader and the reader’s new context are what gives the most meaning to these linkages. In this thesis, the term “intertextuality” adheres to the definition put forth by G.K. Beale as follows. “Intertextuality refers to an earlier text, how that earlier text enhances the meaning of the later one, and how the later one creatively develops the earlier meaning. In this respect, ‘intertextuality’ may be seen as a procedure of inner-biblical or intra-biblical exegesis, which is crucial to doing biblical theology and for understanding the relation of the OT and the NT.” See G. K. Beale. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament : Exegesis and Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 39-40.

⁵ Richard Hays explains about “echo” as follows. “‘Echo’ is the least distinct, and therefore always the most disputable, form of intertextual reference; it may involve the inclusion of only a word or phrase that evokes, for the alert reader, a reminiscence of an earlier text. Readers who hear the echo will discern some semantic nuance that carries a surplus of significance beyond the literal sense of the text in which the echo occurs ordinarily, however, the surface meaning of the text would be intelligible to readers who fail to hear the echoed language.” See Richard B. Hays. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 10.

typology, and patterns, thereby shaping and molding the message through repetition.⁶ This skillful use of literary devices lends itself to the various genres that the texts embody.⁷

There are many echoes from the Old Testament, especially from Genesis 1–2, which establishes the creation motifs in John 9. The water imagery, both from the Old Testament and within the Gospel of John itself, resonates as an echo of the salvation motif in John 9. Additionally, the name of the pool, “Siloam,” which translates to “sent,” echoes the distinctive manner in which Jesus refers to himself as the one “sent” from God.

By employing this method, this thesis will examine a crucial element that can assist in resolving the interpretational challenges found in John 9. Chapter One focuses on the exploration of creation motifs within the narrative of the man blind from birth, drawing parallels to the book of Genesis and its echoes. Chapter Two delves into the water imagery present in the context of the pool of Siloam, examining its significance in relation to various passages in the Old Testament that carry salvific connotations. The symbolic and spiritual implications of the blind man’s washing in the pool will be revealed through the investigation of these intertextual echoes. Lastly, Chapter Three seeks to demonstrate how the echoes of creation and salvation, explored in the previous chapters, intersect with the theme of the Trinity within the passage. When

⁶ James Hamilton analyzed the method that the biblical authors reinforce and summarize the biblical story to make a symbolic message: 1) imagery 2) typology 3) patterns. “The use of symbolism produces what might be referred to as a ‘symbolic universe,’ that is, a set of symbols that explain and interpret the world by representing, or standing for, the world. To refer to the Bible’s symbolic universe is to refer to the set of images, patterns, types, symbols, and signifiers that furnish the minds of the biblical authors.” See Hamilton, James M. *What Is Biblical Theology? : a Guide to the Bible’s Story, Symbolism, and Pattern* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014), 61-91.

⁷ Robert Alter categorized into four literary units to explain how the biblical authors shaped the intended meaning in the text: 1) words 2) actions 3) dialogue 4) narration. “In order to underscore the wider applicability of the approach I have put forth, let me briefly summarize the chief distinctive principles of biblical narrative that have been considered in this study... Let me propose that for the purposes of synopsis we group what we have been discussing under four general rubrics: words, actions, dialogue, and narration.” See Robert Alter. *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 221-35.

considering the interplay of these concepts, theological richness and deeper meaning will emerge by examining the text through this lens.

This thesis endeavors to provide a comprehensive analysis combining creation motifs, water imagery, and the concept of the Trinity based on intertextual echoes. It aims to offer a compelling framework for understanding and resolving the interpretational challenges present in John 9.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ECHO OF CREATION IN THE MAN BLIND FROM BIRTH IN JOHN 9

John 9 is a story of Jesus' healing a blind man. Though there are several other (Matthew 9:27–31; 20:29–34; Mark 8:22–26; 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43) stories in the Gospels where Jesus healed blind men, this story of John 9 is unique because it says he was blind from birth. “Blind from birth” echoes the image of the earth enveloped in “darkness from the beginning” as depicted in the creation account of Genesis 1. This parallel implies that the healing of the blind man in John 9 can be likened to the creation narrative in Genesis 1, wherein God brought forth light amid the initial darkness.

These shared images, types, and patterns that echo the themes of Genesis 1 extend beyond the account in John 9, encompassing the broader Johannine literature. These echoes serve to guide readers in gaining a deeper understanding of the circumstances surrounding the blind man described in John 9.

Echoes of Genesis 1 in the Johannine Literature

The themes of “beginning,” “darkness and light,” and “glory” found in Genesis 1 echo throughout the Johannine Literature. Particularly, these themes echo through the character of the man blind from birth in John 9. The motif of the blind man “from birth” in John 9 echoes the theme of the “beginning.” His “blindness” and subsequent “opening eyes” echo the theme of “darkness and light.” And the purpose and outcome of his healing echo the theme of “glory.”

This section will examine and identify these echoes in the Bible. It will explore how the themes of creation in Genesis 1 find resonance in the account of the man blind from birth in John 9. And in the next section, it will be further discussed whether the theme of creation is effectively portrayed in the passage of John 9.

The Theme of Beginning

“Beginning (תְּרֵאשִׁית)” is one of the main themes of the opening statement in Genesis 1. The Johannine literature uses the equivalent Greek word ἀρχή 20 times out of 55 occurrences (36%) in the New Testament.⁸ This high frequency of usage suggests a strong possibility that the Johannine literature would reflect the motif of creation. The recurrence of this theme throughout the Johannine texts indicates a deliberate and profound connection to the concept of “beginning” in Genesis 1.

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1)⁹

The Gospel of John starts with “in the beginning” (Ἐν ἀρχῇ),¹⁰ which echoes the start of the book of Genesis (תְּרֵאשִׁית; Ἐν ἀρχῇ in LXX). While Genesis 1:1 introduces the act of creation,

⁸ Ἀρχή appears eight times (1:1, 1:2, 2:11, 6:64, 8:25, 8:44, 15:27, 16:4) in the Gospel of John, eight times (1:1, 2:7, 2:13, 2:14, 2:24 x2, 3:8, 3:11) in 1 John and twice in 2 John (5, 6).

⁹ The Bible verses quoted in this thesis are from the NASB95 version unless otherwise mentioned.

¹⁰ The phrase “ἐν ἀρχῇ” implies something before time, not a beginning within time, but an absolute beginning, which can be affirmed only of God, of whom no temporal categories can be predicated. See Moisés Silva, ed, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 416. In that sense, the Gospel of John focuses more on the relationship between God and Jesus by using ‘ἀρχῇ’ as an echo of Genesis 1:1 than its original usage in Genesis 1:1, which focuses on the act of creation itself.

John 1:1 relates it to what existed when creation came into being.¹¹ By doing so, it puts the idea that Jesus (the Word) is the God who created the world in the prologue (John 1:1–18). And the following events in the book often recall his divine identity addressed in the prologue.

1 John 1:1

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life (1 John 1:1)

1 John starts with “that which was from the beginning” (ὅ ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς). In this letter, ἀρχή appears eight times, each time accompanied by the preposition ἀπό, indicating “from the beginning.” The meaning of “ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς” in the letters of John has been subjected to various interpretations.

One widely accepted interpretation is that 1 John 1:1 makes connection with John 1:1, which indirectly echoes the opening statement of Genesis 1:1.¹² The phrase “that which was from the beginning” in 1 John recalls the opening words of the Gospel of John, which read, “In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1). This reference to the “beginning” harkens back to the very start of creation, as depicted in Genesis 1:1, further emphasizing the connection between the Johannine literature and the motif of “beginning” in Genesis 1.

¹¹ George R. Beasley–Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Dallas: Word, 1999), 10.

¹² Karen Jobes divided the meaning of ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς in the letters of John into four categories. 1) the preexistence of the Son, echoing John 1:1 and indirectly Gen 1:1 2) the beginning of a Christian’s life at conversion to faith in Christ 3) the beginning of God’s redemptive work in human history 4) the beginning of the Christian Gospel. Among these interpretations, the first one, emphasizing the preexistence of the Son, fits particularly well with the context of this thesis. See Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 45.

The Theme of Darkness and Light

In Genesis 1, when the heavens and the earth were created, the earth was formless and empty, and darkness (חָשֶׁךְ) was over the surface of the deep. (1:2) God created the light (1:3) and separated it from the darkness. (1:4) The significance of darkness (חָשֶׁךְ) being prominently mentioned in this context is noteworthy. This darkness existed before the creation of humans, implying that it is not directly related to any fallen state caused by human sin. Although Genesis 1:2 does not explicitly state where the origin of the darkness was, other passages in the Bible offer supplementary information.

The One forming light and creating (בָּרָא) darkness (חָשֶׁךְ),
Causing well-being and creating (בָּרָא) calamity (עָרָב),
I am the LORD who does all these (Isaiah 45:7).

In this passage from Isaiah, God delivers a message to Cyrus, calling him even before his birth to save Israel from their enemies. Even though Cyrus may not acknowledge God, God will still honor him and use him to subdue nations and deliver Israel (Isaiah 45:1–6).

Within its literary context, this passage underscores the absolute sovereignty of God while drawing a parallel between darkness (חָשֶׁךְ) and calamity (עָרָב) through a poetic structure. The term עָרָב conveys the consequences or aftermath of unfavorable circumstances rather than denoting moral evil itself.¹³ To comprehend this in the context of Hebrew poetic parallelism, חָשֶׁךְ likely operates within a similar semantic range.¹⁴

¹³ The semantic range of עָרָב is close to ‘bad’ in English. It does not necessarily mean moral evil. In this poetic structure, the opposite word ‘prosperity’ (שְׁלוֹמָה: health, well-being, peace, good relations, good fortune) would be ‘bad’ rather than ‘evil.’ See John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah*, Chapters 40–66, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 204.

¹⁴ Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 2011), 1-28.

Also, from the historical context, Isaiah wrote this statement to refute the claim that God is only in charge of good things (light).¹⁵ Instead, he asserts that God is sovereign over all, including both good and evil, by declaring he created darkness as well as light. This emphasizes God's sovereignty over all things rather than attributing the production of evil to God.

The theme of God's sovereignty over darkness is further highlighted in other biblical passages where God reveals himself in association with the darkness (Exodus 14:20, Deuteronomy 4:11, 5:23, Psalm 18:11).¹⁶ In these instances, darkness serves as a prelude to God's appearance or the beginning of his work. This concept resonates with the idea presented in Genesis 1:2, where darkness also serves as a prelude to the beginning of God's creation work.

On the contrary, light (אור) is a contrasting theme to darkness. In Genesis 1:3, following the prelude of darkness in verse 2, God created light. In this verse, אור refers ultimately to a divine quality, signifying a profound and spiritual aspect.¹⁷ The existence of darkness in Genesis 1:2 was not directly related to human sin or the fall, and similarly, the creation of light in Genesis 1:3 was not either. Instead, its divine quality encompassed numerous attributes, including the power to overcome human sin.¹⁸

¹⁵ "In this assertion, Isaiah is denying the pagan understanding that good and evil (or light and dark) are two eternally coexistent principles battling in the universe. There is only one first principle, and he is light and good. If darkness and evil exist, they do so because the one God permits them to exist. In that sense, he is responsible for their existence." John N. Oswalt, *Isaiah*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 513.

¹⁶ Exodus 14:20 refers to the darkness cast by the pillar of cloud and fire, which darkened the way of the Egyptian army and lightened the way of the Israelites. Deuteronomy 4:11 and 5:23 refer to the darkness associated with the theophany at Mount Sinai. Psalm 18:11 refers to the darkness that enshrouds the presence of God. In these cases, darkness is used either in contrast with the light of his presence or to hide his presence in some way, and the figure of darkness has no negative theological connotation. See Willem VanGemeren, ed., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 4 vols (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 313.

¹⁷ VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE*, 325.

¹⁸ Willem VanGemeren summarized the usage of the word אור into nine categories: 1) light for temple worship 2) light under God's absolute control 3) angels as creatures of light 4) sun, moon, and stars as light-bearers 5) daylight 6) the quality of life that is pleasing to God 7) the absence of light as God's judgment 8) the dew of light following death 9) light of the fire. See VanGemeren, *NIDOTTE*, 324–28.

John 1:4–5

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (John 1:4-5)

Continuing the “beginning” motif of creation in John 1:1–3, verses 4–5 echo the motif of darkness and light motif found in Genesis 1:2–3.¹⁹ However, there are distinct differences in the order of presentation between the two passages. In Genesis 1:2–3, darkness is introduced first, and then light emerges as a result of God’s creation. On the other hand, John 1 first addresses light and then describes the response of the darkness to the light. Furthermore, while the metaphorical meaning of the darkness in Genesis 1:2 may not be explicitly stated, in John 1:5, the meaning of the darkness is clearly defined.

the darkness (σκοτία) did not comprehend it (v. 5b)

the world (κόσμος) did not know him (v. 10b)

Verses 5 and 10 are comparable to each other on the basis of the usage of similar words.

In this comparison, darkness (σκοτία) corresponds to the world (κόσμος), and light (φῶς)

corresponds to Jesus. From the context of the Gospel of John, the term “world (κόσμος)” refers to humanity that has turned away from God through rejection, betrayal, or rebellion.²⁰

Consequently, the semantic meaning of the corresponding word “darkness” in the Gospel of John should encompass the fallen condition of human beings, which differs from the meaning of darkness in Genesis 1:2. This difference is mainly emphasized by the usage of “light” in the

¹⁹ Regarding the motif of darkness, Kruse alternatively suggests John 1:5 could be an echo of Isaiah 9:2. In that case, “the evangelist is speaking of the coming of the light of God into the world in the person of the incarnate Word. Through him light shone among the Jewish people. He entered their darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it – that is, the repeated attempts of Jesus’ Jewish opponents to extinguish the light failed.” See Colin G. Kruse, *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 4 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 57.

²⁰ There are a number of meanings in κόσμος in the Gospel of John. MacLeod suggests that the world in verse 10 is an example of polyvalent usage: 1) humanity, 2) reference to all things in verse 3, and 3) the world in spiritual indifference and blindness. See David J. MacLeod, “The Reaction of the World to the Word: John 1:10–13.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (2013): 400–401.

Gospel of John, which serves as a reference to Jesus. By establishing Jesus' character as the light in the opening verse (1:4), the book sets the foundation for associating the fallen condition with the meaning of darkness in the subsequent verse (1:5).

As a result, there are two possible usages of the word "darkness" in this book. One refers to the darkness of the world (1:5, 10) with the assumption of the fallen condition of humanity. The other refers to the darkness as a pure echo of Genesis 1:2, without necessarily considering the fallen condition. Comprehending these multiple semantic categories associated with the term "darkness" in the Gospel of John is essential to grasp the author's intentions in characterizing the blind man in John 9.

1 John 1:5–6

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth (1 John 1:5-6)

First John echoes the motif of "darkness and light" after echoing the motif of "beginning" from Genesis 1, as the Gospel of John does. Also, it mentions "light" first and then presents "darkness" under the illumination of the light as John 1 does. Unlike Genesis 1:3, where light appears as God's creature, and John 1:4, where light appears as a character of the Word, 1 John 1:5 directly says God is light. This statement has the same context as Jesus' self-declaration, "I am the light of the world." in John 8:12. In both statements, light is not just a creature of God but equivalent to who he is.²¹

²¹ Howard Marshall suggests the thought God is light came from the Old Testament. 1) God revealed himself in fire and light 2) God is said to be clothed in light and glory (Ps 104:2) 3) God's revelation and salvation as light (Ps 27:1; 36:9; Isa 49:6) 4) God's holiness as light. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1978), 109.

As light is directly related to God's nature in 1 John, darkness in this book is discussed in the same context. The subsequent statement, "in him there is no darkness at all," is another way of saying "God is light" and has basically the same meaning.²² It does not mean God did not create darkness nor have sovereignty over darkness. But it means there is no darkness in God's nature.²³

Therefore, the meaning of darkness and light in 1 John 1 is closer to John 1 than Genesis 1. However, they do not exactly match in that 1 John 1 directly connects them to God's nature, while John 1 considers them in their relationship with the world.

The Theme of Good and Glory

According to the larger catechism of the Westminster Confession of Faith, the purpose of God's creation is God's glory.²⁴ In terms of Genesis 1, this purpose is revealed through the word "good" (טוב). It is repeated seven times in Genesis 1 (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) and ends the chapter with the culmination of "very good" (טוב קצת).

²² The relationship between Johannine literature and Qumran and sects of other religions regarding the dualistic worldview have been addressed. Among ten types of duality in first-century Jewish monotheism, addressed by N.T. Wright, Jobes pointed out three of which can be seen in Johannine literature. 1) theological/cosmological duality 2) moral duality 3) eschatological duality. "The dualistic framework shows the theological truth of God and discusses the human condition of life in this world, and presents the eschatological reality of eternal life after death for those who walk in the light." See Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, Rev ed. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 66. N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God*, Christian Origins and the Question of God (Fortress, 1992), 253.

²³ Jobes commented, "the two negatives "no ... none" (οὐκ ... οὐδεμία), emphasizing the complete absence of darkness in God. With this John draws the sharpest of lines to position God and light on one side of the duality; on the other side, darkness represents all that is not of God." See Karen H. Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, Rev ed., Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 64.

²⁴ "Men's chief and highest end is to glorify God and fully to enjoy him forever." Westminster Assembly, *The Westminster Confession of Faith*: Edinburgh Edition (Philadelphia: William S. Young, 1851), 165.

The initial state of the earth was in disorder and void (תְּהוֹ וְרֵקֵם) and in darkness (חָשֶׁךְ). God transformed it into a state of life and light through six days of creation work in Genesis 1. At the end of each day, God proclaimed his creation was good, signifying its continuous movement from a state that was “not” good to one that was good. Finally, with the creation of humans, God’s work culminated in a state that was declared “very” good, indicating the full manifestation of God’s glory in the created world.

Genesis 1 conveys to readers that the ultimate purpose of God’s creation was to reveal his glory through these transformative processes.²⁵ His power to turn disorder and void (תְּהוֹ וְרֵקֵם), and darkness (חָשֶׁךְ) into a realm teeming with life and light demonstrates the purpose of his work was to reveal his glory.²⁶ The theme of God’s glory is not limited to Genesis 1 alone; it resonates throughout the entire Bible, including the Johannine literature.

“Glory” in the Gospel of John and 1 John

After introducing the word that existed in the beginning, full of life and light, the prologue of the Gospel of John proceeds to discuss the concept of glory.

²⁵ The relevance between the creation account in Genesis 1 and the theme of God’s glory is especially found in Psalms. For example, Psalm 19 says,

The heavens are telling of the glory (כְּבוֹד) of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. (Psalm 19:1)

Regarding this verse, James Hamilton commented, “The creation has inspired awe and wonder in David, and he responds to God’s glory in creation by shaping language that celebrates what God has accomplished in making the world.” See James M. Hamilton Jr., *Psalms 1*, Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2021), 254.

²⁶ Kenneth Matthews focused on God’s Spirit, word and wisdom as the power to change the earth to a well-ordered, complete and abounding in life-forms under the watch care of royal humanity. In his view, ‘very good’ (טוֹב מְאֹד) in Genesis 1:31 is echoed in ‘exceedingly good’ (טוֹב מְאֹד מְאֹד) in Numbers 14:7. It would mean both the creation narrative in Genesis 1 and the salvation narrative in Numbers 14 deliver the message of God’s glory through the narrative. See K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1A: 1–11:26*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 175–76.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt (σκηνώω) among us, and we saw His glory (δόξα), glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14)

In terms of narrative sequence, the theme of glory in verse 14 echoes the creation narrative (beginning – darkness and light – glory) found in Genesis 1. However, beyond the parallel, the language used in verse 14 also evokes the Tabernacle narratives in the Torah.²⁷ The verse connects the experience of the Israelites, who saw the glory of God in the Tabernacle, with that of Jesus’ contemporaries,²⁸ who saw the glory of Jesus through his incarnated flesh.²⁹ This linkage suggests a profound spiritual connection between the divine presence experienced in the Tabernacle and the revelation of God’s glory through Jesus’ earthly manifestation.

Indeed, in this verse, the Johannine literature acknowledges that the glory of God becomes experiential through Jesus’ incarnation. 1 John 1:1 also underscores the experiential aspect of Jesus within the same context.

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life. (1 John 1:1)

²⁷ The word ‘dwell’ (σκηνώω) has σκηνή as its noun form, which occurs over 420 times in LXX as a translation of the Hebrew word ‘tent’ or ‘tabernacle’ (תֵּבֶטֶת). See Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 302.

²⁸ There are five options to consider regarding to whom the ‘we’ refers: 1) universal ‘we’: the world in general 2) ecclesial ‘we’: the universal church 3) apostolic ‘we’: the witness of apostolic authority 4) historical ‘we’: those physically present with Jesus 5) sectarian ‘we’: the Johannine community. Klink suggests 4) historical ‘we’ is closest agreement with the emphasis on a real, physical presence and a real, physical seeing. See Edward W. Klink III, *John*, *Anderson Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 109.

²⁹ “The glory of the LORD God was a vast and awesome thing for the believing Israelite. Exodus tells of the elaborate cultus surrounding the tabernacle, and what lengths of ceremony had to be observed to protect the people from the presence of the fearful glory of God’s dwelling. John’s language clearly echoes these things here. “Made his dwelling” in verse 14 (Gk. *skēnoō*) could be rendered literally “pitched his tent among us” or “tabernacled among us”; and from the same root for tabernacle (*skēnē*) derives the word which came to signify the visible presence of the glory of the LORD – the “shekinah glory.” So when John says “we beheld his glory” he is clearly recalling this glory, the glory of the one and only LORD God in theophany, as in the fire on Sinai and as in the tabernacle.” Philip, William. “The Light of Glory: An Exposition of the Prologue of John’s Gospel.” *Churchman* 116 (2012): 113–26.

However, not everyone who saw Jesus was able to discern the divine presence and glory of God emanating from him. Though his glory was visibly manifested through his physical body (John 1:14), many people who were living in spiritual darkness remained oblivious to it (1:5). Consequently, the revelation of God's glory through Jesus' incarnation serves as a test to identify those individuals who sincerely possess the eyes to see God's glory.³⁰ Only those who believe in Jesus possess spiritual eyes to perceive his glory.³¹

“Glory” (δόξα) in the Book of Revelation

And He has made us to be a kingdom, priest to His God and Father – to Him be the glory (δόξα) and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Rev 1:6)

The theme of glory remains prominent in the Johannine literature, and it carries forward into the book of Revelation. In this book, the term “glory” is frequently accompanied by a series of doxologies.³² Most of them fall into the eschatological category, signifying events related to the end times or the final fulfillment of God's plan. Cook's grouping of the usage of “glory” in the Johannine literature supports this observation.³³

³⁰ In other words, those who do not have eyes to see Jesus – those who do not believe in Jesus – cannot see his glory. Therefore, in this context, eyes have a spiritual meaning that one can believe Jesus is the Son of God. John 9 echoes and illustrates this theme with the case of a blind man. His eyes opened not because of the healing but because he believed in Jesus, while the Pharisees were blind not for their physical eyes but for their unbelief. (John 9:39–41)

³¹ “While this glory was to some degree dimmed by his being in flesh (John 17:5), and while it was not perceived as glory at all by some to whom he came because of the cloud of moral darkness that surrounded them (1:5, 9–11; 12:40–41), it was both seen and recognized for what it really was by others (1:14).” Robert Cook, “The 'Glory' Motif in the Johannine Corpus,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984), 295.

³² Doxology appears in Revelation 1:5–6; 4:8–11; 7:12; 11:13; 14:7; 15:4; 19:1–2, 7. Though the setting, occasions, and speakers vary, the object of the doxologies is God. His deity, dominion, omnipotence, transcendence, and sovereignty are extolled. And the returning Christ is the one who ultimately fulfills each of those concepts and is glorified as the Sovereign over all kings and lords. See Cook, “The 'Glory' Motif,” 295–96.

³³ See Cook, “The 'Glory' Motif,” 294. Robert Cook divides the word “glory” usage in the Johannine literature into three categories: 1) Christological, 2) the Christian life, and 3) eschatological. For example, the glory through Jesus' incarnation in John 1:14 belongs to the Christological category. And most of the doxology passages belong to the eschatological category. (except for Revelation 1:5–6. Cook regarded it as the Christian life category.)

It is noteworthy that the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, places significant emphasis on the theme of God's glory. Just as God declared his creation “very good” at the conclusion of the first creation account in Genesis 1, reflecting the purpose of God’s creation, the book of Revelation concludes with the same message of God's glory, marking the culmination of a new creation. This continuity in highlighting God’s glory from the beginning to the end of the Bible underscores its central significance in the divine plan and purpose for all things.

The Creation Themes of Genesis 1 in John 9

Echoes of the Creation Narrative in John 9

The motifs of the beginning, darkness and light, and glory are intricately intertwined in both Genesis 1 and the Johannine literature. In John 9, the echoes of the creation themes between Genesis 1 and the Johannine literature are found in the blind man and the work Jesus did for him.

In the creation narrative, in the beginning (a), God created the heavens and the earth, and it was under darkness (b). (Genesis 1:1–2) Then God created from light (c) (1:3) to man through six days, and it became very good (d) (1:31).³⁴

In John 9, all these factors appear in the character of the blind man. He is introduced as one blind (b) from birth (a) (John 9:1). Then Jesus opened his eyes to see (c) (9:7), explaining his blindness was for the work of God to be revealed (d) (9:3).

Since the beginning of time (ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος)³⁵ it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. (9:32)

The other passages, where believers are subjects to glorify God, such as John 15:8; 16:13–14 belong to the Christian life category.

³⁴ See Table 1.1

³⁵ “Zerwick defines αἰών (–ῶνος, ὅ) here as “the longest possible time whose beginning or end is not considered” (Analysis 230). Ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος οὐκ ἠκούσθη, “from eternity it has not been heard that ...” = “from time immemorial (Moule 73) it is unheard of that ...”” Murray J. Harris, *John*, Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament (Broadman & Holman, 2015), 190.

In addition, in the blind man's confession in John 9:32, the perspective of this passage is evident. According to his testimony, the miraculous healing event performed by Jesus is incomparable to any other events in history, except for God's creation itself.³⁶ The blind man's assertion that nothing like this has occurred since the beginning of time (ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος) (a) implies this miraculous healing event is equivalent to the act of God's creation.

Table 1.1 Echoes of Genesis 1 in John 9

| | Genesis 1 | John 9 |
|---|--------------------------|--|
| a | in the beginning (v. 1) | from birth (v. 1) the beginning of time (ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος) (v. 32) |
| b | darkness (v. 2) | blind (v. 1) |
| c | light (v. 3) | see (v. 7) |
| d | it was very good (v. 31) | to reveal the work of God (v. 3) |

³⁶ Regarding the miracle that happened to himself, the blind man said, “Since the beginning of the time (ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος) it has never been heard.” His confession reflects the author's view that there is no event comparable to this miracle other than the creation in the beginning. Shoukry asserted, “There are at least two levels of a creation theology in this formulation. On the one hand, τυφλός means not only physical blindness but also metaphorical blindness – living in the darkness without the light (1). On the other hand, the word “birth” (γενετή) also opens up a space for a further creation–theological association, since the Johannine idea of the new birth can also be understood as a discrete act of creation (2).” See Zacharias Shoukry, “Creation Motifs in John 9.” *Biblica 102* (2021), 575.

Darkness in the Beginning vs. Blind from Birth

The motif of darkness in Genesis 1, as discussed above, is not chronologically connected to human sin and the fall since that account begins in Genesis 3. In John 9, a similar perspective on the man's blindness is evident in Jesus' response to his disciples' question.

And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?" Jesus answered, "It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed (φανερώω) in him." (John 9:2-3)

Jesus, in his response, affirmed the man's blindness was unrelated to any sin committed by him or his parents. Instead, he associated the man's condition with a divine purpose, likening it to God's act of transforming darkness into a very good creation during the six days of Genesis 1. By connecting the existing problem of blindness to the purpose of revealing the works of God, Jesus highlighted that this man's condition presented an opportunity for God's glory to be manifested. In revealing (φανερώω) the works of God through the healing of the blind man, Jesus demonstrated the transformative power of God's divine intervention.

This perspective on darkness in John 9 seems to differ from the concept of darkness mentioned in the prologue of the book. Instead of drawing meaning from John 1, where darkness symbolizes the fallen state of human nature, the Gospel of John connects with the theme of darkness in Genesis 1. This approach expands the scope of the Gospel's contemplation on darkness, encompassing not only the "after-the-fall" state (as depicted in Genesis 3 and John 1) but also the "before-the-fall" state (as depicted in Genesis 1).³⁷

³⁷ Some scholars have paid attention to the significant parallels between creation and salvation. John Frame commented, "The Genesis creation narrative itself, written in my view by Moses, reflects/anticipates God's redemption of Israel from Egypt. As in Exodus, God commands all the forces of nature. He brings light to the earth as he later brought darkness to Egypt (Gen. 1:3-5; Ex. 10:15). He divides the waters of the earth (Gen. 1:6-10) as he later divided the waters of the Red Sea... In both creation and redemption, God displays himself as the Lord of all the earth. Creation, redemption, and judgment are similar events, requiring the same sovereign power, authority, and presence... Salvation itself, then, is a new creation, a frequent theme in Paul's writings." See John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: an Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013), 189-192. From this perspective, the theme of "darkness" in John 9 can echo both "after-the-fall" state (as depicted in Genesis 3 and

In consequence, Jesus sought to emphasize that man's blindness was not a result of sin but rather a situation that would serve as a platform for God's works to be displayed. This perspective aligns with the concept of God's power of creation revealed in Genesis 1, where darkness was transformed into a magnificent creation, showcasing His glory and goodness.

John 1) and "before-the-fall" state (as depicted in Genesis 1). It is not unreasonable to interpret the darkness theme in John 9 as a continuation of the theme present in the prologue of John 1 (after-the-fall), considering it as a part of the Gospel of John. However, within the context of the narrative, as discussed above, it seems to resonate more closely with the echo of Genesis 1 (before-the-fall). These two seemingly conflicting interpretations can only find reconciliation through their inherent connection. John Frame's discussion about the interplay between these themes sheds light on this perspective. In John 9, the motif of darkness can be seen as a reflection of both creation (Genesis 1) and salvation (Genesis 3). From this perspective, the presence of the "darkness" motif in John 9, echoing both the themes of creation and salvation, serves as evidence supporting the argument for a cohesive relationship between these themes in systematic theology.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ECHO OF SALVATION IN THE POOL OF SILOAM

The miracle of the opening of the blind man's eyes by Jesus in John 9 includes the theme of salvation as well as creation. Although Jesus could have opened his eyes just by a word³⁸ or a touch,³⁹ as in other cases, he had the blind man go through quite a bit of procession.

Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool (κολυμβήθρα) of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. (John 9:6–7 ESV)

The closest one to this case in terms of the healing method is Mark 8:22–26, where Jesus also used his saliva to open a blind man's eyes. But there was no more instrument Jesus used in that case. In contrast, John 9 tells much more specifically about what Jesus did to the blind man. Why did Jesus use these methods of healing?

In terms of the theme of salvation, the pool of Siloam is a significant literary material. Pool (κολυμβήθρα) is one of the items⁴⁰ that remind readers of the water imagery in the Gospel of John. The water imagery often casts a biblical theological message of salvation in this book. Therefore, the pool of Siloam can be understood as material to shout out this message. Also, the

³⁸ Matthew 9:29; Mark 10:52; Luke 18:42

³⁹ Matthew 20:34

⁴⁰ The items of the water imagery in the Gospel of John: Jordan (John 1:28), water in pots of stone (2:6), born of water and the Spirit (3:5), living water (4:14), the pool of Bethesda (5:2), the Sea of Galilee (6:16), rivers of living water (7:38), the pool of Siloam (9:7), washing disciples' feet (13:5), water came out from Jesus' side (19:34) and the Sea of Galilee (21:2)

name “Siloam” (Σιλωάμ) has a strong implication on the theme of salvation, which requires a historical as well as an etymological approach to prove.

The Materials for “Born Again” in John 9

In the conversation with Nicodemus in John 3, Jesus said that Nicodemus could not see the kingdom of God unless he was born again.⁴¹ Jesus’ message of “born again” in John 3 recalls the themes of “life” (1:4) and “children of God” (1:12), which were declared in the prologue (1:1–18) of the book.⁴² It comes from recognizing that the first birth (natural birth) does not lead us to eternal life in God. Jesus’ saying, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6), reflects the idea that the first birth only belongs to the flesh, which cannot inherit the eternal life from God. Therefore, we need to be born again to become children of God, which leads us to eternal life in the kingdom of God.⁴³

Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water (ὕδωρ) and the Spirit (πνεῦμα) he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5)

Jesus specifies two elements to illustrate the concept of “born again” – water (ὕδωρ) and the Spirit (πνεῦμα). While there have been numerous debates about the precise meaning of these

⁴¹ John 3:3

⁴² Howard Marshall explains the theme of salvation in the Gospel of John by connecting the concepts of life (1:4), birth from God (1:13), and born again (3:3, 5). “The nature of salvation naturally corresponds with the description of human need. The most comprehensive term in John for what Jesus gives to people is life or eternal life, which is to be understood as sharing in the life of God (Jn 1:4). It is eternal, in that those who receive it shall never perish (Jn 3:16; 6:27; 10:28). The metaphor of birth from God (Jn 1:13) or being born again (Jn 3:3, 5) conveys the fact that people are without life until they receive the divine gift.” See I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 520.

⁴³ See Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*, 520. Thus, these concepts are similar to one another: born again (John 3:3), children of God (1:12), (eternal) life (1:4) under the theme of salvation.

terms,⁴⁴ both are employed to highlight the distinction between the initial birth and the subsequent spiritual rebirth, thus emphasizing the latter’s significance.

In the context of John 9, these two symbolic representations are employed in the water imagery through the pool of Siloam. When examining this connection, it becomes evident that John 9 serves not only as a miraculous healing event but also conveys a message of salvation. This is achieved by utilizing the imagery of being “born again” through water and the Spirit.

Water Imagery

Repeatedly using water images is one of the distinctive literary methods observed in the Johannine literature.⁴⁵ The water images in the Gospel of John can be divided into two different groups according to their meaning, whether the water in a given passage appears as a life-threatening or a life-giving power.

For example, in John 3:1–21, water (ὕδωρ) appears as a transformative element that contributes to the process of being “born again.” The water imagery within this passage symbolizes life-giving attributes. In contrast, in John 6:16–24, while Jesus’ disciples were

⁴⁴ “Origen suggested that water differs from Spirit only in notion (ἐπίνοια), not in substance (ὕπόστασις). Calvin interpreted water and Spirit means the same thing, comparable to ‘Spirit and fire’ in the preaching of John the Baptist. Odeberg held that water stands for the celestial waters, viewed in mystical Judaism as corresponding to the semen of the fleshly being; to be begotten ‘of water and Spirit’ therefore means rebirth of spiritual seed. A popular interpretation has it that water represents human birth, whether semen of man or waters in the womb, in contrast to birth from the Spirit; this, however, overlooks that the whole expression ‘of water and Spirit’ defines the manner in which one is born from above...It would seem that the text relates birth from above to baptism and the Holy Spirit.” See George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Dallas: Word, 1999), 48.

⁴⁵ Rhonda Crutcher demonstrates the importance of water imagery in the Johannine literature on the ground of the related word count. “Of the 118 instances of the various forms of the words ὕδωρ (water), λίμνη (lake), πηγή (spring or well), κολυμβήθρα (pool), and ποταμός (river) in the New Testament, nine are found in Matthew, seven in Mark, fourteen in Luke and twenty-eight in John. Revelation has 38. The Johannine writings combined (Gospel, 1 John and Revelation) account for 70 instances of these water terms, over half the total in the New Testament.” See Rhonda G. Crutcher, *That He Might Be Revealed: Water Imagery and the Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John*. Eugene (Oregon: Pickwick, 2015), 3.

suffering in the middle of the sea (θάλασσα), Jesus walked on the water to save them. In this case, the water imagery serves a distinct purpose, representing a life-threatening power rather than a life-giving.⁴⁶ These contrasting meanings of the water imagery are not exclusive to the Gospel of John. The usage of water imagery finds its origins in the Old Testament, particularly tracing back to the book of Genesis.

Water Imagery in Genesis 1 and 2

The book of Genesis employs various instances of water imagery to convey profound meaning. One notable illustration can be found in Chapters 6–9, where the narrative of Noah’s flood serves as a prominent example. However, another remarkable utilization of water imagery is present in Chapters 1 and 2. These chapters depict the creation account, and water plays a significant role in shaping the narrative.

Water as a Life-Threatening Power in Genesis 1

The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep (תְּהוֹם), and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters (מְיַחַד). (Genesis 1:2)

In Genesis 1:2, the initial state of the earth is described as “formless and void” and “darkness over the surface of the deep (תְּהוֹם),” where the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of “the waters” (מְיַחַד). It is arguable if there is an etymological relationship between the Hebrew word “deep” (תְּהוֹם) and “Tiamat” from Enuma Elish.⁴⁷ However, the role of the water

⁴⁶ The water imagery with a life-giving role in the Gospel of John is seen in the passages of John 1:29–34, 3:1–21, 4:1–26, 7:37–39, 9:1–12, 13:1–17, 19:31–37. The passages with a life-threatening role of the water imagery are John 2:1–12, 5:1–15, 6:15–21, 21:1–14. Some of these passages do not clearly show life-giving (1:29–34) or life-threatening (2:1–12, 5:1–15, 21:1–14) roles. But they function either positively (1:29–34) or negatively (2:1–12, 5:1–15, 21:1–14) for the life-giving work of Jesus in the contexts.

⁴⁷ Victor Hamilton asserts it is unlikely the biblical creation story has a Babylonian background even if there is etymological equivalence between תְּהוֹם and Tiamat. See Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters*

(הַהוֹם and הַמָּיִם) is certainly hostile to God’s work of creation, especially with the combination of adjacent words – formless, void and darkness – that draw a negative image behind the creation scene.

God's creation work started off in the background of hostile images. As the days went on, the earth became more and more flourishing with the life God created. In that sense, the water imagery in Genesis 1 plays a life-threatening role against God's life-giving creation activity. The usage of the water imagery with this implication is observed in other parts of the Old Testament.⁴⁸ And it would also have affected one group of the water imageries in the Gospel of John.

Water as a Life-Giving Resource in Genesis 2

While the water in Genesis 1 represents the lifeless state of the primordial earth, a different kind of water imagery appears in Genesis 2.

Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the Lord God had not sent rain (מָטָר) upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a mist (גֶּאֱזַי) used to rise from the earth and water (מַיִם) the whole surface of the ground. Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being. (Genesis 2:5–7)

1-17, *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 110. Still, it is interesting the hostile image of the deep (הַהוֹם) to God’s creation could have an imagery connection with Tiamat as an evil goddess from Enuma Elish.

⁴⁸ Noah’s flood (מַבּוּל) (Genesis 6–9) and the Red Sea (יָם) (Exodus 14) are other examples of the use of the water imagery in a life-threatening sense in the Old Testament. But the water imagery in these passages does not only function as life-threatening factor, but also delivers a message that it could be converted to a positive role once it’s controlled or managed by God’s power. For example, God created life by controlling the water in Genesis 1. And God saved his people by departing the Red Sea in Exodus 14. Crutcher also asserts “God’s mastery of the waters of creation is more than just a fantastical image out of an Israelite fairy tale; it is a vital part of the theology and mindset of the Old Testament authors.” See Rhonda G. Crutcher, *That He Might Be Revealed: Water Imagery and the Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2015), 34–64.

Similar to Genesis 1, Genesis 2 first introduces a problematic backdrop before delving into God's act of creation. However, there is a difference in using water imagery between the two. While the water image (הַמַּיִם) was used for the problematic situation in Genesis 1, Genesis 2 deals with the absence of the water image – not sending rain (מַטֵּר לֹא) – as problematic.

And Genesis 2 deals with the water imagery as a life-giving resource, which is quite the opposite of Genesis 1. It describes a mist (אֶדָן) and watering (שָׁקָה) of the ground as a background of the creation of man (אָדָם). Considering the etymological relationship between man (אָדָם) and the ground (אֶדָן) as well as the narrative describing the ground that contains water,⁴⁹ they imply that water was used as a resource for creating man's life. And the use of water imagery as a life-giving resource in Genesis 2 peaks in the description of rivers in verses 10–14.

Now a river (נָהָר) flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers (רְאִישׁ). The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river (נָהָר) is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river (נָהָר) is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river (נָהָר) is the Euphrates. (Genesis 2:10–14)

A river (נָהָר) flowed out of Eden and became four branches (רְאִישׁ). The four rivers flowed to the lands around Eden. The gold and precious stones in those areas not only show the beauty and value that the river from Eden brought but the life-giving power of the river. Wenham linked the image of the river flowing from Eden to the one in Ezekiel 47.

The picture of a great river flowing out of Eden is akin to Ps 46:5, “There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,” and Ezekiel's description of the eschatological

⁴⁹ In the process of the man's creation, the dust of the ground was a source of his life with the breath of God. Also, in terms of etymology, man (אָדָם) and ground (אֶדָן) have the same root, which shows their close relationship. Wenham asserted, “Though אֶדָמָה is grammatically the feminine form of אָדָם, it is doubtful whether there is any etymological connection between the two words. It is sometimes suggested that both terms are derived from אָדָם “red.” the color of man's skin and also the earth. This too seems improbable. Certainly, however, there is a play on the two terms אָדָם and אֶדָמָה, to emphasize man's relationship to the land. He was created from it; his job is to cultivate it (2:5, 15); and on death he returns to it (3:19).” See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary 1 (Dallas: Word, 1987), 59.

Jerusalem from which a great river will flow to sweeten the Dead Sea (Ezek 47:1–12). In every case, the river is symbolic of the life–giving presence of God.⁵⁰

According to this kind of view – Eden, as a high mountain meaning the temple and the river flowing from Eden as the one from the holy of holies⁵¹ – the water imagery in Genesis 2 is a powerful presentation of the water as a life–giving resource from God. The meaning of the water imagery in this chapter can be applied to interpret water imagery in other parts of the Bible.

Water Imagery in the Gospel of John

Within the Gospel of John, one can observe the presence of diverse water imagery. The two fundamental categories of water imagery found in the book of Genesis – those depicting both life–threatening and life–giving roles – also apply to the Gospel of John. This parallelism between the two texts enables readers to delve into a more profound understanding of the Gospel as they contemplate the multifaceted symbolism associated with water and its transformative power.

⁵⁰ Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 65.

⁵¹ Michael Morales also linked the image of Eden to a high mountain, which then is linked to the image of the tabernacle and the temple. Therefore the river flowing from Eden means the life–giving water in Ezekiel’s vision. “Genesis 2:6, 10–14 describes a spring–fed river that runs through the garden and then flows down from Eden, branching out into four riverheads to water the rest of the earth, suggesting a high locale that corresponds well with a mountain summit. The temple being an embodiment of this mountain of God, wherein the source of abundant waters is located, explains similar descriptions of a river flowing out of the temple’s holy of holies (see Ezek. 47; cf. Ps. 46:5), the holy of holies corresponding to the mountain summit. In sum, then, ‘Eden is thought to be a cosmic mountain upon which Adam serves as priest.’ Or, to reverse the point, the later high priest of Israel serving in the tabernacle must be understood fundamentally as an Adam–figure serving on the (architectural) mountain of God.” See L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, *New Studies in Biblical Theology* 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 52–53.

Water Imagery as Life–Threatening Power in the Gospel of John

As discussed above, water imagery as a life–threatening power in Genesis 1 continues to flow in the rest of the Bible. The narratives of Noah’s flood in Genesis 6–9 and crossing the Red Sea in Exodus 14 also have water imagery in this context.⁵² In the Gospel of John, the narrative of Jesus’ walking on the water (6:16–24) can be divided into this group.

Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea (θάλασσα), and after getting into a boat, they started to cross the sea (θάλασσα) to Capernaum. It had already become dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea (θάλασσα) began to be stirred up because a strong wind was blowing. (John 6:16–18)

The word “sea” (θάλασσα) is the standard equivalent of יָם in Hebrew.⁵³ The sea in the darkness, which set up a hostile background of the narrative in this passage, functions like Genesis 1:2. Also, the motif of “crossing” the sea with divine (Jesus’) intervention resembles Exodus 14. Thus, this passage reveals Jesus’ divine nature by echoing both themes of creation and salvation. In doing so, the water imagery threads the three passages by showing God's overwhelming power to dominate the life–threatening water.

Water Imagery as a Life–Giving Resource in the Gospel of John

Water imagery as a life–giving resource originates from the river flowing from Eden as a symbolic temple in Genesis 2, as discussed above. In the Gospel of John, water imagery is often

⁵² Other than them, the echoes of the water imagery with the theme of creation (Genesis 1) are observed in Job 26, 38, Psalm 29, 104, Proverbs 30:4; the theme of Noah’s flood (Genesis 6–9) Psalm 36; the theme of Red Sea (Exodus 14) in Exodus 15:15, Psalm 74:15, 78:13.

⁵³ “In the LXX, θάλασσα occurs over 420×, esp. in Ezekiel (55×), Joshua (50×), Psalms (39×), and Exodus (36×). Although in isolated cases it renders a variety of Heb. terms, θάλασσα is the standard equivalent of יָם H3542 (Gen 1:26 et al.). This Heb. noun, however, has a broader semantic range, being applied not only to the open sea but also to inland bodies of water; indeed, the vocab. of bib. Heb. does not incl. a separate term for ‘lake.’ See Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 400.

used with this meaning. A parallel can be drawn between Genesis 2 and John 7 based on the similarity of this image.

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, “From his innermost being will flow rivers (ποταμός) of living water (ὕδωρ).”” 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. (John 7:37–39)

The river flowing from someone with a temple image, which becomes a life-giving resource, is the same use of the water imagery in Genesis 2. Though it is arguable whether the one with a temple image is a believer of Jesus or Jesus himself,⁵⁴ it is clear that the water imagery combined with the temple imagery in this passage echoes Genesis 2 and Ezekiel 47 from the Old Testament, which thereby forms life-giving water imagery with other passages in the Gospel of John.

But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. (John 19:34)

The living water from a temple image in John 7 strongly supports the scene of the cross where blood and water came out of Jesus’ side.⁵⁵ If Jesus is the ultimate temple, he is the one who flows the water of eternal life to the world. He completed this mission and was glorified through death on the cross. In that sense, all the water flowing from the temple imagery in the

⁵⁴ There are two views regarding this. 1) the rivers are from believers of Jesus, and 2) it is from Jesus alone. Carson admits that the textual and stylistic evidence strongly favors the first one. But he doesn’t deny that the Scripture within the context of the Feast of Tabernacles makes the second one valid. See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 321–28.

⁵⁵ Crutcher connects the images of John 7:37-39, Ezekiel 47:1-12 and John 19:34 under the theme of the water flowing from the temple. See Rhonda G. Crutcher, *That He Might Be Revealed: Water Imagery and the Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2015), 155–56.

Old and New Testaments is fulfilled in this scene.⁵⁶ And it explains the living water motifs in other parts of the book.

Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water (ὕδωρ) will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water (ὕδωρ) that I will give him will become in him a well of water (ὕδωρ) springing up to eternal life.” (John 4:13–14)

The water (ὕδωρ) that Jesus promises to give her ultimately means eternal life. If Jesus is the ultimate temple, this passage uses the same imagery as in John 7.⁵⁷ Jesus is the source of eternal life, visualized as living water from a well. To emphasize the live-giving power of Jesus, the well attributed to him is contrasted with the well of Jacob. Everyone who drinks the water (ὕδωρ) from Jacob’s well will thirst again (4:13). It means there is no life-giving power in the “water (ὕδωρ)” from Jacob's well. But, the same “water (ὕδωρ)” becomes a life-giving resource when it springs from Jesus' well. It means it is not the material (water) itself that brings eternal life but the one who originates it.

This perspective also applies to the different use of the water imagery between Genesis 1 as a life-threatening water and Genesis 2 as a life-giving water. What made the difference was the control of God. Likewise, in the Gospel of John, water under Jesus’ authority is used as a life-giving resource, while water out of Jesus’ authority is a life-threatening.⁵⁸ And it is not only

⁵⁶ Considering Jesus’ declaration of himself (his body) as the temple (John 2:21), the water flowing from the temple imagery was visually fulfilled on the cross.

⁵⁷ The water from the temple imagery in John 4 is in line with the same one from Genesis 2, Ezekiel 47, Joel 3, Zechariah 14, and Revelation 21, 22. Beal explained, “Temple imagery may also be expressed when Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at Jacob’s well that he is the source of ‘living water’ which will ‘spring up to eternal life’ for those drinking from him (John 4:10–14). Just as water had its source in the first sanctuary in Eden and flowed down and became a life-giving element, likewise Ezekiel, alluding to the Garden of Eden, prophesied that the same thing would be the case with the end-time temple to be built in the new Jerusalem (Ezek. 47:1–12)” See G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 196.

⁵⁸ The principle that God’s control over water is the key to deciding whether it is life-giving or life-threatening is applied to the water imagery in the New Testament. For example, in John 6:16–18, even though the

John 4 that makes use of the contrasting water imagery in this book. In the case of John 5 and 9, another contrasting water imagery develops the narrative.

Contrasting Water Imagery between John 5 and 9

One common thing in the use of water imagery between John 5 and 9 is that they are pools (κολυμβήθρα). However, the contextual meanings of the pool of Bethesda in John 5 and the pool of Siloam in John 9 are opposite to each other as the well of Jacob and Jesus in John 4.

When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, “Do you wish to get well?” The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool (κολυμβήθρα) when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” (John 5:6–7)

In John 5, the pool (κολυμβήθρα) is a resource that people believe there is a life-giving (healing) power. When Jesus asked the sick man if he wished to get well, he answered that all he wanted from Jesus was to help him move into the pool, not even expecting the life-giving power from Jesus himself. Although Jesus healed the sick man by word, the narrative remains unclear if he had spiritual healing by faith.⁵⁹ It shows the pool of Bethesda functions as a hindrance to one’s reaching life-giving power from Jesus.

In contrast, the pool (κολυμβήθρα) of Siloam has a clear image as an instrument for healing the blind man. Though Jesus did not mention anything about the pool of Bethesda to heal

sea (θάλασσα) was life-threatening power, it was changed when Jesus walked on it, who controlled the sea with his life-giving power.

⁵⁹ It is arguable if what happens in John 5:10–15 shows the sick man’s belief or unbelief. Gary Burge commented, “We can surmise that the man has gone to the temple to offer praise to God for his healing (cf. Luke 17:14) or perhaps to confirm his healing with priests.” On the other hand, Klink commented, “Even with his own body as evidence, the healed man represents a particular response to the Gospel that replaces the power of God with impersonal and superstitious religion and fails to believe in Jesus, the personal manifestation of the power of God.” Regardless of his faith, it still stands that the pool of Bethesda functions as a hindrance for one to reach life-giving power from Jesus. See Gary M. Burge, *John*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 175. Edward W. Klink III, *John*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 275.

the sick man in John 5, he ordered the blind man to wash in the pool of Siloam in John 9. Again, it is clearly revealed that the source of healing was not the instrument (water) itself but Jesus, who had controlled the instrument for his saving purpose.⁶⁰ Just as the water imagery from Eden or the temple had life-giving power, and water from Jacob's well contrasted with Jesus in terms of life-giving resource, the water imagery in John 9 points to Jesus as the one who gives life. In that sense, the meaning of "Siloam," the name of the pool, is significant.

The Meaning of Siloam (Σιλωάμ)

The Scripture offers several indications that allow us to explore the origin of the name "Siloam." By examining the relevant passages in the Bible, conducting historical and etymological analyses becomes a viable approach. Additionally, a literary analysis can be undertaken by considering the significance of "sent," which serves as the literal meaning of "Siloam." These various methodologies provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the name "Siloam."

The Historical and Etymological Analysis of Siloam

Siloam (Σιλωάμ) appears not only in John 9 but also in Isaiah 8:6 and Nehemiah 3:15 in its Hebrew forms.

Inasmuch as these people have rejected the gently flowing waters of Shiloah (שִׁלּוֹחַ)
And rejoice in Rezin and the son of Remaliah (Isaiah 8:6)

⁶⁰ Crutcher also commented that the healing was not from the water but from Jesus. "Likewise, while in John 5 we have an instance of water which is efficacious for healing but not needed by Jesus, in John 9 we have water which in and of itself is of no particular importance but gains its significance and abilities completely by its association with the person of Christ." See Rhonda G. Crutcher, *That He Might Be Revealed: Water Imagery and the Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2015), 130.

Shiloah (שִׁלּוֹחַ) was the name of an aqueduct that channeled the water from Gihon Spring down to a pool (the lower/old pool) just inside the southeast city wall of Jerusalem.⁶¹ During Hezekiah's time, there was a construction, facing an Assyrian invasion, to renovate it into an underground aqueduct to a new pool. The name Shiloah was transferred to the new pool, which is thought to be the place of “Siloam” (Σιλωάμ) in John 9:7.⁶²

This historical background is how the literal meaning of “Siloam” (Σιλωάμ) and “sent” (שִׁלַּח) came from. And the etymological connection between Siloam (Σιλωάμ) and sent (שִׁלַּח) leads to the possibility that Siloam (Σιλωάμ) is related to Shiloh (שִׁלּוֹחַ) in Genesis 49:10.⁶³

The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until (עַד כִּי) Shiloh (שִׁלּוֹחַ) comes,
And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. (Genesis 49:10)

If there is an etymological connection between Siloam (Σιλωάμ) and Shiloh (שִׁלּוֹחַ), then the etymological evidence should lend support to Jesus' identity as the Messiah. However, determining the meaning of “Shiloh” (שִׁלּוֹחַ) in the context of the Old Testament presents a challenge. According to prevailing interpretations, “Shiloh” (שִׁלּוֹחַ) is understood either as a combination of לֵה and שִׁי or as a corruption of מְשַׁלְּהוּ, allowing the third consonant ה to retain its function as a pronoun suffix rather than being a corruption of “ח” in שִׁלְחָה.⁶⁴ As a result, it

⁶¹ Shelah (שֶׁלַח) in Nehemiah 3:15 is thought to be the name of the lower/old pool. See E. W. G. Masterman, D. F. Payne, “Siloam,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 510–11.

⁶² Masterman, “Siloam,” 511.

⁶³ M. J. Edwards suggested this based on the Latin Vulgate translation. “The paraphrase in the Latin Vulgate—qui mittendus est, ‘he who is to be sent’ — implies that the subject is a person. At the same time it foreshadows the etymology of Siloam from the word meaning ‘sent’ at John 9:7, thus intimating (as Bede saw) that the man and the pool are typologically equivalent.” See M. J. Edwards, *Shiloh to Siloa: Paradise Lost 1.11*. (Oxford University Press, 2015), 58.

⁶⁴ It is arguable what שִׁלּוֹחַ means in the context of Genesis 49:10. Major interpretative options are 1) “Shiloh” is the place where the ark rested for a while in the time of the Judges 2) “Shiloh” could be translated as “ruler” – corruption of “מְשַׁלְּהוּ” (his ruler) – which refers to a Davidic ruler or the Messiah 3) “Shiloh” means

becomes challenging to definitively establish an etymological link between Siloam (Σιλωάμ) and Shiloh (שִׁלֹּחַ).

The Literary Analysis of Siloam

The meaning of Siloam, “sent” (ἀποστέλλω), has a significant repetition all over the Gospel of John. The word ἀποστέλλω appears the most in the Gospel of John among the New Testament books. The word, “Siloam” (Σιλωάμ)’s original Hebrew root “שִׁלֹּחַ” is mainly translated to ἀποστέλλω.⁶⁵ However, in the Gospel of John, ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω tend to be used without clear difference in the semantic range.⁶⁶ Therefore, in order to find how the meaning of “Siloam” (“sent”) is used in the Gospel of John, both ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω need to be examined.

“tribute” (’הַל “to him”+ שִׁי “tribute”) 4) “Shiloh” could be translated as “to whom it belongs” (שׁ + הַל “which is to him.”) which is based on the ancient versions and refers to the Davidic dynasty or the Messiah. See Biblical Studies Press, *The NET Bible First Edition Notes* (Biblical Studies Press, 2006), Ge 49:10. Walton explains, based on the infrequent combination of עַד עַד (until), the phrase “Until (עַד עַד) Shiloh (שִׁלֹּחַ) comes” should be interpreted that the scepter is “nondeparting” that eventually Shiloh will come of it as the climax. And he also suggests the third option – “Shiloh” means “tribute” – is the best suitable grammatically and in terms of parallelism. See John H. Walton, *Genesis*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 715–16. Wenham also supports the third option. “Until tribute is brought to him” has been described as the “most famous crux interpretum in the entire OT” See Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, Word Biblical Commentary 2 (Dallas: Word, 1994), 477. However, Matthews recommends the fourth option based on the Messianic texts such as 4Q252, saying, “until the Messiah of Righteousness comes” and other ancient manuscripts. “Most commendable is the alternate Hebrew textual reading (in Samaritan and MT MSS) šellōh (or šellō), meaning “to whom it belongs,” thus “until he comes to whom it [i.e., scepter] belongs.” See K. A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27–50:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 895.

⁶⁵ “שִׁלֹּחַ” is a common word meaning “send” in the OT. Out of more than 800 occurrences in the LXX, “שִׁלֹּחַ” is translated to “πέμπω” in only five cases. The majority is translated to words related to “ἀποστέλλω.”

⁶⁶ Though Lexham Theological Wordbook puts “sometimes” noting the interchangeability of the two words, the definition and their usages in the Gospel of John do not make a practical difference. Louw–Nida also does not mention their semantic difference. Their semantic ranges are considerably overlapping in this book. In this case, Carson’s argument about ‘Problems surrounding synonyms and componential analysis’ regarding αγαπαω and φιλέω can be applied. They are used interchangeably without practical semantic differences in the Gospel of John as well. See Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 190. William A. Simmons, “Calling or Commission,” ed. Douglas Mangum et al., *Lexham Theological Wordbook*, Lexham Bible Reference Series (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014). D. A. Carson, *Exegetical Fallacies*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996), 51–53.

The Gospel of John occupies 29% of the total usage of the two words – ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω – with the meaning of “send.”⁶⁷ In most cases, either verb, with no clear semantic difference, is combined with God as a subject and Jesus as an object in a sentence below.⁶⁸

Table 2.1 The occurrences of “send” (ἀποστέλλω / πέμπω) in the Gospel of John

| | Subject: God (or the Father) | Object: Jesus (or the Son) |
|-----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ἀποστέλλω | 18 out of 28 occurrences (64%) | 18 out of 28 occurrences (64%) |
| πέμπω | 27 out of 32 occurrences (84%) | 25 out of 32 occurrences (78%) |

There is an intention of using the verb “sent” – either ἀποστέλλω or πέμπω – in this book. It is mostly used when Jesus reveals his identity as the one sent from God. Thus, when Jesus speaks the word “sent,” it reminds his listeners of his identity in terms of his relationship with God. In that sense, the name “Siloam,” which means “sent,” has a significant message within this book. It is not simply the name of a place. It is a sign pointing to Jesus regarding his identity in terms of his relationship with God.

Therefore, “water” from a pool named “sent” (Siloam) echoes the symbolic image of the water flowing from the temple. In that frame, Siloam is the living water under God’s control

⁶⁷ Ἀποστέλλω appears 28 times in the Gospel of John out of 131 times in the New Testament (20.7%). πέμπω appears 32 times in the Gospel of John out of 79 times in the New Testament (40.5%).

⁶⁸ The majority of the clauses with either of the two verbs – ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω – have God as a subject and Jesus as an object (God ‘sent’ Jesus). ἀποστέλλω appears in 1:6, 19, 24; 3:17, 28, 34; 4:38; 5:33, 36, 38; 6:29, 57; 7:29; 8:42; 9:7; 10:36; 11:3, 42; 17:3, 8, 18 (twice), 21, 23, 25; 18:24; 20:21. The subjects of those – other than God – are Jesus (4:38), Pharisees or Jews (1:19, 24; 5:33; 7:32), Siloam (9:7), sisters (11:3), Annas (18:24). The objects of those – other than Jesus – are John (1:6; 3:28), priests and Levites (1:19, 24; 5:33), disciples (4:38; 17:18), Siloam (9:7), officers (7:32), word (11:3). πέμπω appears in 1:22, 33; 4:34; 5:23, 24, 30, 37; 6:38, 39, 44; 7:16, 18, 28, 33; 8:16, 26, 29; 9:4; 12:44, 45, 49; 13:16, 20 (twice); 14:24, 26; 15:21, 26; 16:5, 7; 20:21. The subjects of those – other than God – are Jesus (13:20, 15:26, 16:7, 20:21), Pharisees or Jews (1:22). The objects of those – other than Jesus – are priests and Levites (1:22), John (1:33), God (13:20), the Holy Spirit (14:26; 15:26; 16:7), disciples (20:21).

(through Jesus, who was sent from God). Its salvific power is revealed through the opening of the eyes of the blind man, which recalls the theme of “born again” in John 3.⁶⁹ He was born again to be a child of God by the salvific power of the water of Siloam. Then, considering John 3:5, it leads to a question of where the role of the Spirit is in John 9.

Water and the Spirit

The diverse views about the meaning of “water” and “the Spirit” in John 3:5 were already discussed in the previous section. In terms of the biblical–theological sense of the water imagery, it is compelling that the Spirit has an equivalent image to water (in the sense of “life–giving”) in the Gospel of John.

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. (John 7:39)

Following Jesus’ declaration of living water flowing from the temple imagery in John 7:37–38, the narrator comments that the living water means the Spirit. As was already discussed, the imagery of the water flowing out of the temple is prevalent in the Old Testament and is echoed throughout the Gospel of John. As one of those cases, the interpretation of the living water as the Spirit in John 7:39 not only applies to 7:37–38 but provides an interpretational key to other cases with the same imagery.

⁶⁹ The blind man’s seeing does not only mean the healing of his physical eyes but the opening of his spiritual eyes to see the truth. The salvific sense of ‘seeing’ in this context is revealed in the conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees in 9:40–41. Michaels comments, “To “see” is to recognize who Jesus is and worship him, as the blind man finally did. In saying, “We see,” therefore, they are lying, for they have not believed in Jesus. The likely point is that everyone is “born blind” in the sense of being unable to “see the kingdom of God” or enter it without a second birth (see 3:3, 5). This in itself is not sin. Nicodemus, for example, was never accused of sin. The sin comes in the lie that “We see,” and that consequently no new birth is needed or wanted (see 8:44–45, “When he speaks the lie, he speaks from his own, because he is the liar and the father of it. But I, because I speak the truth, you do not believe me”).” See J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, The New International Commentary on New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 575.

In that imagery, both water and the Spirit have in common that they are sent from Jesus. In order to be a life-giving resource, water has to flow from Jesus. And the Spirit is always told that as he descended from heaven (God) to Jesus, he is sent from Jesus to the world in the Gospel of John.⁷⁰ From this perspective, “water” and “the Spirit” in John 3:5 are parallel imagery.⁷¹ They both symbolize life-giving resources flowing from Jesus, which generates the second birth leading to eternal life. In that sense, water from “Sent” (Siloam) in John 9 reflects the image of the Spirit. Therefore, the blind man who washed in Siloam and opened his eyes to see is a living example of a “born again” child of God (unlike Nicodemus) in John 3. And it reveals the echo of the salvation motif in this narrative.

⁷⁰ John 1:32–33; 3:34; 6:63; 7:39; 15:26; 16:13; 20:22

⁷¹ A similar parallelism between water and the Spirit is observed in a prophecy of Isaiah.

For I will pour out *water* (מַיִם) on the thirst land
and streams on the dry ground
I will pour out My *Spirit* (רוּחַ) on your offspring
and My blessing on your descendants (Isaiah 44:3)

Crutcher commented, “Here water and spirit are directly equated via poetic parallelism... The development of the direct connection of water and spirit in Jewish-Christian thought does not come to full fruition until the Gospel of John, but the seeds of the connection can certainly be found in Old Testament thought.” See Rhonda G. Crutcher, *That He Might Be Revealed: Water Imagery and the Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (Oregon: Pickwick, 2015), 83–84.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ECHO OF THE TRIUNE GOD THROUGH HIS WORK AT SILOAM

The echoes of creation and salvation in the healing at Siloam show the depth of Jesus' revelation in such a short event. The unusual condition of the man blind from birth pointed to the creation motif, and the washing at the symbolic name of Siloam ("sent") reflected the salvation motif. However, they were not the end of what Jesus revealed through this narrative. It culminates in the revelation of the cooperation of the Triune God (the Trinity) for the work of creation and salvation.

The work of God the Father is revealed through Jesus' act of making the clay (mud and saliva), which echoes God's making of a human in Genesis 2. The relationship between the Triune God is also played by the name Siloam, which recalls the repeated phrases "the Father *sent* the Son," "the Father *sent* the Spirit," and "the Son *sent* the Spirit" throughout this book. The relationship of "sending" and "being sent" not only remains between the Triune God but extends to his witnesses. As a result, the blind man who was healed and saved in the pool of Siloam becomes Jesus' witness in the relationship of the Triune God.

Jesus' Work as God the Creator at Siloam

When Jesus healed the blind man, he spat on the ground to make mud with the saliva and anointed the blind man's eyes with it (9:6). Though he could have healed without using any materials, he used clay and saliva for the healing. It means there was his intention to use them.

Many scholars, including Iranaeus,⁷² have seen its connection with God's creation of humanity in Genesis 2:7.⁷³

Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground (אֶדְמָה), and breathed (נָפַח) into his nostrils the breath of life (נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים); and man became a living being (אִישׁ חַי). (Genesis 2:7)

God formed man of dust from the ground, which was wet being watered by a mist (Genesis 2:6). Therefore, the dust from the ground that God used to form a human and the mud that Jesus made by spitting on the ground have the same images of clay.

And God breathed his “breath of life” (נְשֵׁמַת חַיִּים) into the clay, and it became a living being. The “breath of life” has the same image of “wind” in Genesis 1:2, which is often translated into “the Spirit” (רוּחַ).⁷⁴ In other words, the Spirit of God that hovered over the waters for the creation in Genesis 1:2, and the breath of life that made the human a living being, have the same characteristic as wind. The work of God’s forming the human with mud and the breath of life is mirrored in the work of Jesus’ healing the blind man with mud and the water of Siloam in John 9.⁷⁵

⁷² “For, from the earth out of which the Lord formed eyes for that man, from the same earth it is evident that man was also fashioned at the beginning.” See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885), 543.

⁷³ Edward Klink commented, “The moment described by the narrator is not between a miracle worker and an ailing blind man, but between the Creator and “his” creation.” See Edward W. Klink III, *John*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 439.

⁷⁴ Regarding the interchangeable use of “breath” (נְשֵׁמַת) and “the Spirit” (רוּחַ), Matthews comments, “This depiction of ‘inbreathing’ (nāpaḥ) has a close parallel in Ezekiel’s vision of dry bones (37:9–10), where the reconstituted skeletons of the slain are brought to life again by the inbreathing of the ‘spirit.’ Here Ezekiel has ‘spirit’ (rūaḥ) for ‘breath of life’ (nišmat ḥayyim), but the two are treated as virtually the same here and at times elsewhere.” See K. A. Matthews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, *The New American Commentary 1A* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 196.

⁷⁵ As previously discussed, both the breath of life in Genesis 2:7 and the water of Siloam point to the Spirit.

As a result of the work of God, the human was created to be a living being (הָיָה אִישׁ חַי) in Genesis 2:7. Likewise, the work of Jesus would create eyesight for the blind man in John 9:6–7. In that sense, Jesus’ work of making mud with saliva echoes God’s work of forming the human.

Table 3.1 Echo of Genesis 2:6–7 in John 9:6–7

| | Genesis 2:6–7 [God] | John 9:6–7 [Jesus] |
|------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Material 1 | the dust of the ground (wet) | mud with saliva |
| Material 2 | the breath of life | water |
| Result | living being (original birth) | seeing (born again) ⁷⁶ |

The Threefold Meaning of “Siloam” for the Triune God

As previously discussed, Jesus’ role as the Son is reflected in the name of the pool, “Siloam” (“sent”), which echoes Jesus’ identity as the Son of God by the word “sent” from the symbolic phrase “sent from God” repeated throughout the Gospel of John. “Siloam” (“sent”) not only implies the relationship between God (the Father) and Jesus (the Son) but is applied to the relationship between God and the Spirit, and also between Jesus and the Spirit. As God sent Jesus, God sent the Spirit, and also Jesus sent the Spirit.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ From the perspective of the Gospel of John, “seeing” the kingdom of God is the result of “born again.” It is comparable to the description of a “living being” as the result of God’s creation (the original birth).

⁷⁷ The relationship between “sending” and “being sent” is a key terminology for defining the Trinity in the Gospel of John. In this relationship, God the Father is “twice–sender,” Jesus the Son is “sent one–turned–sender” and the Holy Spirit is “twice–sent.” See Andreas J. Köstenberger and Scott R. Swain, *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John’s Gospel*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 24 (Downers Grove, IL:InterVarsity Press, 2008), 179.

The Father *Sent* the Son

In most cases, “sent”⁷⁸ is used in the context of “the Father sent the Son” in the Gospel of John.⁷⁹ The meaning of “sent” in that context can be divided into several categories according to usage.⁸⁰ These categories could be grouped under two significant concepts – the meaning of “sent” (1) within their relationship and (2) for their relationship with the world.

First, in terms of “within the Father and Son’s relationship,” Jesus uses this phrase, “the Father sent the Son,” to indicate his origin from the Father. For example,

I know Him, because I am from Him, and He *sent* (ἀποστέλλω) Me. (John 7:29)
Therefore Jesus said, “For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who *sent* (πέμπω) Me.” (7:33)

Jesus attributes his knowledge of the Father to his origin (he was sent from the Father) in John 7:29. Also, he points to the Father as his ultimate destination as he was sent from the Father. In this usage – “within their relationship” – of “sent,” Jesus eventually reveals his unity with the Father.⁸¹

Second, in terms of “their (the Father and the Son) relationship with the world,” Jesus says he was sent from the Father to claim his agency as the representative of the Father. He came

⁷⁸ As discussed, there is no clear difference in semantic range between ἀποστέλλω and πέμπω in the Gospel of John. Either word could be used to mean ‘send’ without making a semantic difference.

⁷⁹ See the literary analysis of “Siloam” above.

⁸⁰ Regarding the meaning of “sent,” Köstenberger and Alexander divided it into ten categories. “In John’s sending Christology the sent one is to know the sender intimately (7:29; cf. 15:21; 17:8, 25); live in a close relationship with the sender (8:16, 18, 29; 16:32); bring glory and honour to the sender (5:23; 7:18); do the sender’s will (4:34; 5:30, 38; 6:38–39) and works (5:36; 9:4); speak the sender’s words (3:34; 7:16; 12:49; 14:10b, 24); follow the sender’s example (13:16); be accountable to the sender (passim; cf. esp. ch. 17); bear witness to the sender (12:44–45; 13:20; 15:18–25); and exercise delegated authority (5:21–22, 27; 13:3; 17:2; 20:23)” See Andreas J. Köstenberger and T. Desmond Alexander, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 53 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 206.

⁸¹ Jesus’ unity with the Father is a great theme of the Gospel of John. Not only the repeated use of the word “sent,” but Jesus’ claiming his deity by saying “I am” and his oneness with God (10:30) echoing “Shema” pattern show it. Regarding the “Christological monotheism,” see Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 239–52.

to the world with the authority of the Father so that whoever receives him receives the Father, whoever believes in him believes in the Father, and whoever honors him honors the Father.⁸² He possesses the very same authority as the Father, functioning as both Judge and Life-giver.⁸³ He came to the world as the Father's agent, equipped with the same authority to carry out the Father's will. Therefore, it is for a missional purpose that he was sent from the Father to the world. And it also highlights the unity between the Father and the Son, as evidenced by their shared authority.

The Father *Sent* the Spirit

There are several cases that the Spirit is associated with the word "sent" in the Gospel of John. In the context of the Father's sending the Spirit, there is one case in John 14:26.

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will *send* (πέμπω) in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (John 14:26)

In this verse, the origin of the Spirit has two characteristics. First, the Spirit is sent from the Father. As the Father sent the Son, he also sent the Spirit. Second, the Spirit is sent in the name of Jesus. As the Son was sent in the name of the Father, the Spirit is sent in the name of the Son. It means the Spirit comes as the representative of Jesus.⁸⁴ As Jesus came as the agent of the Father, the Spirit is the agent of Jesus.

⁸² References regarding Jesus' being sent from God as the agent of "believe in" are John 5:24, 38; 6:29; 11:42; 12:44; 17:8, 21, 25; as the agent of "receive" 13:20; the agent of "honor" 5:23

⁸³ References regarding Jesus' being sent from God as the Judge are John 3:17; 8:16, 26; as the life-giver 6:57; 17:3

⁸⁴ Regarding the relationship of "the name" and "the representative," Beasley-Murray comments, "Jesus affirmed that he had come 'in the name of' his Father (5:43; 1:25), as his representative; the Spirit, however, is sent in the name of Jesus; he comes as his representative. The Spirit no more comes in his own name than Jesus came in his own name." See George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary 36 (Dallas: Word, 1999), 261.

The Son *Sent* the Spirit

The Son also sent the Spirit as the Father did.

When the Helper comes, whom I will *send* (πέμπω) to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me (John 15:26)

The difference is, while there is nothing arguable that the Father is the sender of the Spirit in John 14:26, the Son says he would send the Spirit from the Father in John 15:26. It implies that his role as the sender of the Spirit is not entirely independent.⁸⁵ But he intentionally shares this role with the Father.

However, it is not a totally new character of the Son found in this matter. The Son never does anything by himself or for himself, which is exactly what he means by the repeated use of “sent” in the Gospel of John. He accomplished the will of the Father for the Father’s glory, depending on the Father all the time. Therefore, considering his dependence on the Father, it is not out of context for him to say that both the Son and the Father are the senders of the Spirit.

The Triune God and His Witness

The threefold meaning of Siloam between the Triune God extends to the fourth meaning as the blind man opens his eyes by washing at Siloam. He became a witness of Jesus, who was *sent* from the Triune God throughout the rest of the narrative in John 9. Furthermore, the narrator describes him as almost like a member of the Triune God by using the word “anoint” (ἐπιχρίω) and “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) as well as Siloam.

⁸⁵ That is the reason there is a disagreement between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches and the Orthodox Church regarding this matter. The Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches hold that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son while the Orthodox Church holds that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only. See Gregg R Allison, and Wayne A Grudem. *Historical Theology : An Introduction to Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 430.

A Witness *Sent* from God

The term “Sent” in the Gospel of John holds a profound significance that extends beyond the relationship between the Triune God. It encompasses a broader understanding of the connection between God and His witnesses.

There came a man *sent* from God, whose name was John. (John 1:6)

John the Baptist is a witness of the Light (1:7). Though he was a human, the Gospel of John introduces him as “sent from God,” which is designated only for Jesus or the Spirit in this book.⁸⁶ His role as a witness of the Light is significant in the same prologue of the book, where the relationship between the Father and the Son is the central theme. It shows that God invites Jesus’ witness into their divine relationship.

As the first witness in the book, John represents all the following witnesses of Jesus. Jesus’ witnesses testify about him as the Father and the Spirit testify about the Son.⁸⁷ In that sense, Jesus’ witnesses play the same important mission as the Triune God. Therefore, God glorifies Jesus’ witnesses by inviting them into his glorious relationship as the Father glorifies the Son, the Son glorifies the Father, and the Spirit glorifies the Son.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ D.A. Carson points out that when ‘sent from God’ is used for Jesus, it indicates his pre-existence, while in John’s case, it is scarcely predicated. See D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 138. However, it is hard to deny the significance of John as a witness of Jesus, indicated by the same trinitarian phrase ‘sent from God.’

⁸⁷ References in the Gospel of John regarding the witnesses’ testimony about Jesus (the Light), including John the Baptist, are 1:7, 8, 15, 32, 24; 5:33 (John); 4:39 (Samaritan woman); 12:17 (those with Lazarus); 15:27 (disciples); 19:35; 21:24 (narrator), regarding the Father’s testimony about the Son are 5:32, 37; 8:18, regarding the Spirit’s testimony about the Son is 15:26.

⁸⁸ References in the Gospel of John, regarding the Father’s glorifying the Son, are 8:54; 13:32; 17:1, 5, regarding the Son’s glorifying the Father are 12:28; 13:31, 32; 14:13; 17:1, 4, regarding the Spirit’s glorifying the Son is 16:14.

When the man blind from birth in John 9 washed in Siloam, he became Jesus' witness. The meaning of Siloam ("sent") is applied to him because he became a "sent" one as a witness of Jesus.

For the rest of the narrative in John 9, he played the role of a faithful witness. The Pharisees investigated him for whether or not he believed in Jesus. Despite the threat of excommunication, he witnessed that Jesus was from God (9:33). Jesus' witness ended with the confession of believing in Jesus and worshipping him (9:38).

He represents Jesus' witnesses, sent from God, much like John the Baptist in the book's prologue. (John 1:6–7) The narrative shows that God exalted him by echoing words related to his divine characteristics – "anoint" (ἐπιχρίω) and "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι) as well as "Siloam" – for this man. God's invitation for him into the relationship of the Trinity reveals how God glorifies those who bear witness for him.

Anoint (ἐπιχρίω)

The word "anoint" (משח in Hebrew) is generally used only for three groups – the tabernacle and the priesthood, the kingship, and the prophets – in the Old Testament. It appears in the form of "anoint," "anointing," or "anointed one" 130 times in the Old Testament. Its noun form משיח (anointed one) is generally understood to indicate the "Messiah," the eschatological coming Savior, which points to Jesus in the New Testament.⁸⁹ However, it is noteworthy that

⁸⁹ Though it is arguable how to interpret משיח in the context of Daniel 9:24–26, משיח is generally believed to refer to the coming Savior, Jesus. See Victor P. Hamilton, "1255 משיח," ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1999), 531.

משח has a much broader usage, mostly referring to ritual or formal activity associated with the inauguration and dedication of the three groups.⁹⁰

The Hebrew word משח is mainly translated into the Greek word χρίω in the LXX.⁹¹ And χρίω, the root of ἐπιχρίω, appears five times in the New Testament.⁹² In four out of the five occurrences, χρίω is used for the act of anointing upon Jesus, while the other one usage was for God's anointing upon Paul and his coworkers.⁹³ In cases of χρίω's derivative use – other than ἐπιχρίω – they all mean either God's anointing, anointed one, or ritual activity⁹⁴, which is consistent with the semantic range of משח. The other derivative form ἐπιχρίω appears only twice in the New Testament. And both of them appear in John 9.

Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he *anointed* (ἐπιχρίω) the man's eyes with the mud.

He answered, “The man called Jesus made mud and *anointed* (ἐπιχρίω) my eyes and said to me, ‘Go to Siloam and wash.’ So I went and washed and received my sight.” (John 9:6, 11 ESV)

⁹⁰ “The two roots for anoint משח and שח express two different aspects of the act of smearing or pouring oil on oneself or another... With only four exceptions, משח always refers to ritual or formal activity associated with inauguration and dedication. שח, on the other hand, always refers to a cosmetic, and perhaps occasionally a medicinal, use of oil in the common round of life.” See Moisés Silva, ed., *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 1123.

⁹¹ It occurs seventy-five times in the LXX and is used in the symbolic ritual sense. “it denotes not merely the physical act of applying a fluid to the body, but also (and primarily) the act of investing a person with the authority to perform an office (cf. esp. Isa 61:1, where a physical ritual is prob. not in view).” See Silva, *NIDNTE*, 698.

⁹² “χρίω occurs 5× in the NT, ἐγγρίω once (Rev 3:18, of putting salve on the eyes), and ἐπιχρίω twice (John 9:6, 11, of smearing mud on a blind man's eyes); the noun χρίσμα occurs 3× (all in 1 John). Both the simple vb. and the noun are used exclusively in a fig. sense, indicating the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, special power, or a divine commission.” See Silva, *NIDNTE*, 699–700.

⁹³ Four out of five cases of χρίω in the New Testament are used to mean anointing upon Jesus (Luke 4:18; Acts 4:27; 10:38; Hebrews 1:9). Only one case in 2 Corinthians 1:21, it means anointing upon Paul and his companions.

⁹⁴ the usage of the derivative forms of χρίω: χρίσμα (anointing; three times in 1 John) means God's anointing for believers; ψευδόχριστος (false Messiah; twice in the Gospel of Matthew) means false anointed one, thereby keeping the etymological meaning of “Messiah”; ἐγγρίω (anoint, smear; once in Revelation) means anointing (smear) for believers.

In both cases, ἐπιχρίω is used to describe the act of the process of Jesus' healing the eyes of the blind man with mud and saliva, which is translated to "anoint" in ESV and NKJV.⁹⁵ Considering the immediate context – his miraculous healing, salvation, and taking a missional role as a witness of Jesus – it is considered that the author's intention of using ἐπιχρίω is not just out of symbolic ritual sense but implying "setting apart for service to God," which means it is consistent with the semantic range of χρίω and πψη.⁹⁶

Given its infrequent occurrence in the New Testament, there remains ongoing debate regarding the precise definition of ἐπιχρίω in John 9. While it may not be entirely unfeasible to unearth Christological connotations by examining the immediate context and the usage of χρίω and its derivatives, such interpretations are subject to varying viewpoints.⁹⁷

Nevertheless, regardless of the exact literal meaning of ἐπιχρίω, the fact remains that Jesus designated the blind man as an agent through a ceremonial process ministered by his own hands for God's mission. This act effectively facilitated the blind man's inclusion in the relationship of the Triune God, positioning him as a witness to this divine relationship.

⁹⁵ ἐπιχρίω is translated into "anoint" in ESV and NKJV, "smear" in NET, "apply" in NASB, "spread" in CSB, NLT, and NRSV, and "put" in NIV.

⁹⁶ There are three Greek words – χρίω (x5), ἀλείφω (x9), and μυρίζω (x1) – translated into "anoint" in the NT. As μυρίζω (the verb form of μύρον, which means "myrrh") only appears once and is simply a noun form of "myrrh", we can focus the main discussion for the semantic difference on χρίω and ἀλείφω. Regarding this, Silva comments, "In contrast with χρίω, the vb. ἀλείφω is not used by the NT writers in the specifically religious sense of setting someone or something apart for service to God. Occurring 9× (8 of them in the Gospels), it always refers to the physical action of anointing, performed exclusively on people: for the care of the body (Matt 6:17); as a mark of honor to a guest (Luke 7:38, 46 [2×]; John 11:2; 12:3); to honor the dead (Mark 16:1); and to heal the sick (Mark 6:13; Jas 5:14)." See Silva, *NIDNTTE*, 221. The author's choosing ἐπιχρίω in the context, instead of ἀλείφω or other words, implies that this act of anointing is not simply a human performance but for setting apart for God.

⁹⁷ Martin Connell, "Making Christ of the Man Born Blind (John 9:1–41): A Hypothesis." *Ecclesia Orans* 25 (2008): 328–329.

“I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι)

After the blind man washed his eyes in Siloam and came home seeing, he witnessed to his neighbors that Jesus opened his eyes. While testifying, his neighbors argued among themselves if he was the man who had been blind.

Therefore the neighbors, and those who previously saw him as a beggar, were saying, “Is not this the one who used to sit and beg?” Others were saying, “This is he,” still others were saying, “No, but he is like him.” He kept saying, “I am the one.” (ἐγώ εἰμι) (John 9:8–9)

Though English translations say “I am the one,” “I am the man,” or “I am he,” his actual answer is only “I am.” (ἐγώ εἰμι) in Greek. The use of ἐγώ εἰμι in the Gospel of John echoes the use of God’s divine name, “I AM WHO I AM” (ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν in LXX) in Exodus 3:14.⁹⁸ Among the twenty–four times of the absolute appearance of “ἐγώ εἰμι” in the Gospel of John, Jesus spoke it twenty–three times. As Bauckham comments, the echoing of “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) in this book implicitly points out that Jesus can be the only Savior only because he is identified with the only God.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM” (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה); and He said, “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM (אֶהְיֶה) has sent me to you.’” (Exodus 3:14)

The English translation “I AM” (אֶהְיֶה) in the third row, which God told Moses as his divine name, is different from the LXX translation. The LXX translates ‘אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה’ (I AM WHO I AM in NASB) as “ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν” (“I am the one who is” in literal translation), and the “I AM” in the third row, not as “ἐγώ εἰμι” but as “Ὁ ὢν,” the literal translation of which should be “the one who is.” Regarding this difference, Bauckham comments, “Like most of the New Testament writers, John not only uses the Septuagint as his regular form of the Old Testament text, but also knows the Hebrew text and, when the point he is making requires it, may allude directly to the latter. Perhaps he based the absolute ‘I am’ sayings directly on the Hebrew of Exodus 3:14.” See Richard Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 246.

⁹⁹ See Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John*, 250.

Except for Jesus, the blind man is the only one who says “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) in this book.¹⁰⁰ As Jesus said “ἐγώ εἰμι” to reveal his divine identity, the man said “ἐγώ εἰμι” to witness his identity as the one who experienced Jesus’ grace. Therefore it shows the narrator’s intention to elevate faithful witnesses of Jesus as well as their testimonies to the extent of Jesus’ divine identity and testimony.

The Image of the Triune God in His Witness

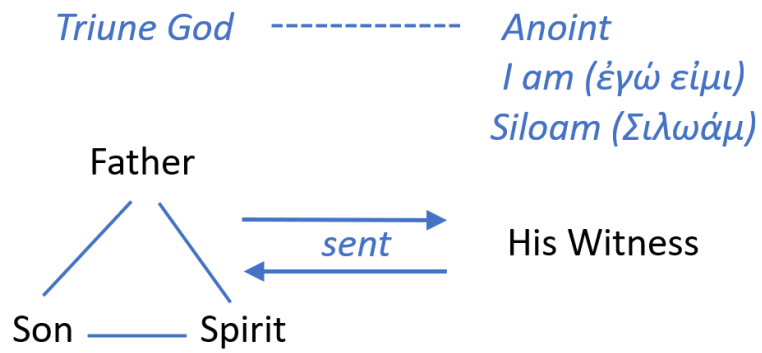
In summary, this is the blind man’s story. He was anointed (ἐπιχρίω)¹⁰¹ by Jesus, washed his eyes in the pool of Siloam, and became Jesus’ witness to testify “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι). All three factors point to the divine character of the Triune God. “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι) is the name of the Father. The “anointed” is another name (“Christ”) of the Son. The pool of “Siloam” (“sent” water) is the symbolic nature of the Spirit. This narrative shows the glorious change of the man to become Jesus’ witness, echoing those words and images that imply the Triune God. The theme of the unity between the Triune God and his believers, which flows throughout this book, also touches this man who became Jesus’ witness with the unity of the Triune God in him.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ John the Baptist (1:20, 27; 3:28) and Pilate (18:35) said these words in a negative sense with οὐκ (not). Peter (18:17, 25) said without ἐγώ (I) and in a negative sense. All three cases are not the absolute appearance of “ἐγώ εἰμι.”

¹⁰¹ His “anointing” does not necessarily depend on the lexical sense of ἐπιχρίω. It has more to do with the contextual evidence that indicates his taking a role as an agent (witness) of Jesus through the ceremonial procession at Siloam, which began with Jesus’ laying his hands on him.

¹⁰² The unity between the Father, the Son and believers are emphasized in passages such as John 14:23; 15:4–7, 9–10; 17:21–23

Figure 1. The Triune God and His witness in John 9



CONCLUSION

The parallels between the man blind from birth in John 9 and the world at the beginning stage of God's creation in Genesis 1:2 are evident. This connection is emphasized by the motifs of "beginning," "darkness and light," and "good and glory," which resonate throughout the Johannine literature, including this passage. The man's blindness from birth and the subsequent opening of his eyes embody these motifs derived from Genesis 1. Just as God initiated the creation of the heavens and the earth over the seven-day period, Jesus brings about a transformation in the blind man, resembling a glorious new creation. This comparison illustrates how the divine act of creation, in the beginning, finds its echo in the healing of the blind man by Jesus.

The pool of Siloam bears significant intertextual connections, particularly regarding water imagery and God's salvation. This water imagery, representing the living water from the temple of God, is a recurring motif throughout the Bible, especially in the Gospel of John. The pool of Siloam, with its meaning "sent," not only echoes the water imagery found in the Bible but also resonates with the symbolic use of the word "sent" about Jesus. In the Gospel of John, the term "sent" is frequently associated with Jesus being sent from God, emphasizing his divine mission and role as the Savior. Furthermore, the water flowing from Jesus is linked to the concept of the Spirit, as stated in John 7:39. This connection between water and the Spirit underscores the transformative and life-giving power of God's salvation, which is manifested through Jesus.

The name “Siloam” (“sent”) also carries significant theological implications, reflecting the relationship within the Triune God and between the Triune God and the world through its missional connotations. The Gospel of John repeatedly employs the word “sent” not only in the context of “the Father sent the Son” but also “the Father sent the Spirit” and “the Son sent the Spirit.” This trinitarian word “sent” extends beyond the boundaries of the Triune God to encompass the blind man, who, when he washed in the pool of Siloam, became a witness to Jesus. As a result, he was sent from God to the world to testify about Jesus, becoming a participant in God’s missional work. This participation in God’s mission leads to a profound relationship between the Triune God and believers. The blind man’s witness is glorified by being drawn into the relationship of the Trinity, symbolized by the context of “anointing” and his testimony “I am” (ἐγώ εἰμι), as well as the significance of “Siloam.” Through this, believers and the Triune God become unified, emphasizing the intimate and transformative nature of this relationship.

The narrative of John 9 extends beyond merely displaying Jesus’ grace and healing power. Through biblical–theological analysis and tracing echoes in the passage, it becomes evident that this story is intricately connected to larger systematic theological themes such as Creation, Salvation, and Trinity. Just as the Trinity worked together in the act of creation, they united in the redemptive mission to bring salvation to believers. The unity within the Trinity goes beyond their mutual love and encompasses their divine cooperation and love towards humanity, bearing its fruits in creation and salvation. The Triune God calls his witnesses from darkness to his light, invites them to his salvation, and sends and glorifies them in the unity of the Trinity. In this divine unity, believers are invited to partake in the life of the Trinity, becoming one with God.

In summary, Jesus revealed the glory of the Triune God through the healing of the man blind from birth in the narrative of John 9. By sending this man to the pool of Siloam, Jesus orchestrated his salvation through the collaborative effort of the Trinity. The same Triune God, who revealed his glory through the acts of creation and salvation, extends an invitation to his witnesses to participate in his glory.

Bibliography

- Allison, Gregg R, and Wayne A Grudem. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine : A Companion to Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011.
- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Poetry*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
- _____. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 2011.
- Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Balz, Horst Robert, and Gerhard Schneider. *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Barrett, Matthew. *Canon, Covenant and Christology: Rethinking Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel*. Edited by D. A. Carson. New Studies in Biblical Theology 51. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.
- Bauckham, Richard. *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple : Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007.
- Beale, G. K. *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*. Edited by D. A. Carson. Vol. 17. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.
- _____. *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament : Exegesis and Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Beasley–Murray, George R. *John*. Vol. 36. Word Biblical Commentary. Dallas: Word, 1999.
- Borchert, Gerald L. *John 1–11*. Vol. 25A. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996.
- Bromiley, Geoffrey W., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–1988.
- Buchanan, G. W. “The Tower of Siloam.” *The Expository Times* (2003): 37–45.

- Carson, D. A. *The Gospel according to John*. The Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- _____. *Exegetical Fallacies*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1996.
- Connell, Martin. "Making Christ of the Man Born Blind (John 9:1–41): A Hypothesis." *Ecclesia Orans* 25 (2008): 311–33.
- Cook, W Robert. "The 'Glory' Motif in the Johannine Corpus." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (1984): 291–97.
- Crutcher, Rhonda G. *That He Might Be Revealed: Water Imagery and the Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of John*. Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick Publications, 2015.
- Edwards, M J. "Shiloh to Siloa: Paradise Lost 1.11." *Notes and queries* 63 (2016): 56–59.
- Evans, Craig A. *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue*. Vol. 89. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
- Frame, John M. *Systematic Theology : an Introduction to Christian Belief*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013.
- Freedman, David Noel, Gary A. Herion, David F. Graf, John David Pleins, and Astrid B. Beck, eds. *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- Grigsby, Bruce. "Washing in the Pool of Siloam: A Thematic Anticipation of the Johannine Cross." *Novum Testamentum* 27 (1985): 227–35.
- Grudem, Wayne A. *Systematic Theology : an Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Hamilton, James M., Jr. *Psalms*. Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary. Bellingham WA: Lexham Academic, 2021.
- _____. *What Is Biblical Theology? : a Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014.
- Hamilton, Victor P. *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
- Harris, Murray J. *John*. Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament. B&H Academic, 2015.
- Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke, eds. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

- Hays, Richard B. *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016.
- _____. *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.
- Hisa, Ito. “Contextual Survey of John 9 – Chapter 3.” *Acta Theologica* 35 (2015): 69–90.
- Irenaeus of Lyons. *The Writings of Irenaeus*. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. Translated by Alexander Roberts and W. H. Rambaut. Ante-Nicene Christian Library. 2 vols. Dublin: T. & T. Clark, 1868–1869.
- Jobes, Karen H. *1, 2, and 3 John*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- Keown, Mark J. *Discovering the New Testament: An Introduction to Its Background, Theology, and Themes: The Gospels & Acts*. Vol. I. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018.
- Kittel, Gerhard, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964.
- Klink, Edward W III. *John*. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016.
- Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, M. E. J. Richardson, and Johann Jakob Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J. and Scott R. Swain. *Father, Son and Spirit: The Trinity and John's Gospel*. Edited by D. A. Carson. New Studies in Biblical Theology 24. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2008.
- Köstenberger, Andreas J. and T. Desmond Alexander. *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*. Second Edition. New Studies in Biblical Theology 53. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020.
- Kruse, Colin G. *John: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 4. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Edited by Donald A. Hagner. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993.
- MacLeod, David J. “The Reaction of the World to the Word: John 1:10–13.” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 160 (2003): 398–413.
- Marshall, I. Howard. *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004.

- Masterman, E. W. G., Payne D. F. "Siloam." *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988.
- Mathews, K. A. *Genesis 1-11:26*, The New American Commentary 1A. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996.
- _____. *Genesis 11:27-50:26*. The New American Commentary 1B. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *The Gospel of John*. The New International Commentary on New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Morales, L. Michael. *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord?: A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 37. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015.
- Newman, Barclay Moon, and Eugene Albert Nida. *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*. UBS Handbook Series. New York: United Bible Societies, 1993.
- Orr, James, John L. Nuelsen, Edgar Y. Mullins, and Morris O. Evans, eds. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 5 Vols. Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915.
- Oswalt, John N. *Isaiah*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2003.
- _____. *The Book of Isaiah*. The New International Commentary on Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.
- Philip, William J U. "The Light of Glory: An Exposition of the Prologue of John's Gospel." *Churchman* 116 (2002): 113-26.
- Reymond, Robert L. *John, Beloved Disciple: A Survey of His Theology*. Fearn, UK: Christian Focus Publications, 2001.
- Schaff, Philip, ed. *Saint Chrysostom: Homilies on the Gospel of St. John and Epistle to the Hebrews*. A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series. Vol. 14. New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *New Testament Theology : Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Silva, Moisés, ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis*, 5 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014.
- VanGemeren, Willem, ed. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997.

- Vincent, Marvin Richardson. *Word Studies in the New Testament*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1887.
- Vos, Geerhardus. *The Eschatology of the Old Testament*. Edited by James T. Dennison Jr. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001.
- Walton, John H. *Genesis*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001.
- Wenham, Gordon J. *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary 1. Dallas: Word, 1987.
- _____. *Genesis 16–50*, Word Biblical Commentary 2. Dallas: Word, 1994.
- Westminster Assembly. *The Westminster Confession of Faith: Edinburgh Edition*. Philadelphia: William S. Young, 1851.
- Whitacre, Rodney A. *John*. The IVP New Testament Commentary Series 4. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Witherington, Ben, III. *The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010.
- Wright, N. T. and Michael F. Bird. *The New Testament in Its World: an Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the First Christians*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.
- Wright, N. T. *The New Testament and the People of God: Christian Origins and the Question of God*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1992.