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Abstract Critical to understanding the widespread symbolism and imagery pointing to Jesus Christ in the New Testament is an exegetical grasp of the content—that is, an understanding of the historical, literary, and theological context of the language. The image of water recurs frequently throughout the New Testament Gospels as a symbol of the Savior's purity, cleansing power, true doctrine, and so forth. Similarly, blood is used often to reflect the sacred mission of Christ and the price of our salvation. This article investigates this imagery, particularly as used by Apostle John, to explain the significance of the Savior's mission in mortality and the miracle of his mercy in immortality.

"And the Word Was Made Flesh": A Latter-day Saint Exegesis of the Blood and Water Imagery in the Gospel of John

Eric D. Huntsman

Both blood and water provide powerful images in the first half of the Gospel of John. Although instances of blood and water in John can be taken separately, a comprehensive, exegetical approach[1] to the gospel suggests a consistent, overarching imagery with water turning to wine—symbolic perhaps of blood—at Cana in John 2:1–11; water and spirit being the source of the new birth in 3:1–21; water "springing up to everlasting life" in 4:4–42; Jesus's blood as a source of life in the Bread of Life discourse of 6:26–59; and rivers of living water flowing from those who believe in Jesus in 7:37–39. Critical to understanding this symbolism is the sign of blood and water streaming from Jesus's side as he hangs from the cross in John 19:34–45, where it becomes apparent that the sign represents symbols of Jesus's dual nature: his ability *as a mortal* to lay down his life as an offering for sin, but his continuing *divine* ability to work "the infinite and eternal atonement" and become the source of eternal life for those who accept him. This symbolism resonates with Latter-day Saint understanding of the nature and role of Jesus Christ.

1. Exegesis consists of a close reading of a scriptural text that seeks to "lead out" its original meaning by understanding its historical, literary, and theological context. For a basic review of the exegetical method and how Latter-day Saints may consider using it, see Eric D. Huntsman, "Teaching through Exegesis: Helping Students Ask Questions of the Text," *Religious Educator* 6/1 (2005): 107–26.

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Asking Questions of the Text

In biblical studies, the examination of the person and work of Jesus is known as Christology, and scholarship of the New Testament Gospels often puts the four surviving texts on a continuum, with Mark representing a simpler, even "low," Christology on one end of the spectrum and with John representing the most developed, divine portrayal of Jesus on the other. The high Christology of John has particular resonance for Latter-day Saints, where the *Logos* hymn of John 1:1–18 accords with LDS teachings on premortality, particularly with the premortal identity and role of Jesus before the incarnation. In addition, several passages of restoration scripture and LDS teaching shape the hermeneutic that Latter-day Saints can bring to bear on the exegesis of the Gospel. Of particular note are 1 Nephi 11:12–33 on the condescension of God, and Doctrine and Covenants 93:2–10 on the premortal state and mortal incarnation of Jesus Christ. For Latter-day Saints, the resurrection is understood as the rising of a tangible, corporeal body of flesh and bones that is "spiritual" in that it is animated and quickened by spirit (see 1 Corinthians 15:42–44; Alma 11:45) rather than sustained and nourished by blood as are mortal, earthly bodies (see Genesis 9:4, where blood is described as being the life of flesh). These perspectives allow an interpretation of the blood and water imagery that makes these elements symbolic of mortality on the one hand and eternal life on the other, making them truly *sēmeia*, or signs that witness who Jesus was and what he did for mankind.

While Latter-day Saints, together with many conservative schools of biblical interpretation, might not accept all the assumptions of conventional studies of New Testament Christology—particularly an evolving model moving from resurrection, adoption, and conception Christology to preexistent Christology[2]—most would agree that John's explication of Jesus's nature and role is unique among the New Testament Gospel records. Nowhere is this more evident than in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1–18). Important for LDS

2. For example, Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to New Testament Christology* (New York: Paulist, 1994), 103–41.

exegesis of the *Logos* hymn are echoes found in a revelation received by Joseph Smith on 6 May 1833, now canonized as Doctrine and Covenants 93. In Latter-day Saint scripture this revelation provides Jesus Christ's own commentary on important Johannine themes, including the unity of the Father and the Son (D&C 93:3–5; John 10:30), the premortal existence and role of the Word (D&C 93:8–10; John 1:1–3), and being begotten or becoming the sons of God (D&C 93:20–22; John 1:12–13).

With the powerful statement "and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," John 1:14 lays out the incarnational theology of his Gospel. Jesus was not just a man but the divine *logos* who was veiled in flesh during the time that he lived (*eskēnōsen*, literally "pitched his tent") among men, recalling how Jehovah lived among Israel in the wilderness tabernacle (which throughout the Septuagint and the book of Hebrews was a *skēnē* or "tent").[3] This verse, echoed in Doctrine and Covenants 93:11, receives further explication in restoration scripture, including 1 Nephi 11:12–33, that portrays the concept of the condescension in Christological categories within the context of a visionary experience. In 1 Nephi 11:12–20, the *person* of Jesus is described in incarnational terms—namely, the premortal Jesus Christ, conventionally identified in LDS theology as the divine Jehovah who took upon himself a mortal body of flesh and blood (John 11:20–25; cf. Mosiah 15:1–4), whereby he became both the mortal son of Mary and the divine Son of God, the Eternal Father. Then, in 1 Nephi 11:26–33, the *work* of Jesus is portrayed through his ministry among the children of men and ultimately in his death on the cross for the sins of the world.[4]

3. Walter Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), s.v. "skēnos" and "skēnoō," 929. See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, 2 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1966), 29–35; F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 37–42; Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 82–93; Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Eric D. Huntsman, and Thomas A. Wayment, *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 133.

4. Latter-day Saint commentators frequently identify this division as representing the condescension of God the Father (John 11:12–20) on the one hand and the condescension of God the Son (11:26–33) on the other; see, for example, Joseph Fielding McConkie

Between these two pericopes lies the interpretive centerpiece of the vision of the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi (1 Nephi 11:21–25). This centerpiece describes Christ as the love of God, the tree of life, and as the fountain of living waters, the latter being particularly important for interpreting the imagery of blood and water in the Gospel of John (11:21–25).

While the prologue of John does not explicitly connect the incarnate Word with blood, John 1:13 does contrast those who are born of God with those who are born only of blood and the will of the flesh, suggesting that the first birth for all, including Christ, is one of flesh and blood. Later in the Fourth Gospel the second birth is described in terms of water and spirit (e.g., John 3:3–5). Thus the prologue's emphasis on the Word becoming flesh implicitly connects the incarnation with blood. In LDS exegesis flesh and blood together consistently refer to living, albeit mortal, bodies (Ether 3:8–9; see Leviticus 17:11–14; Ecclesiastes 14:19; 1 Corinthians 15:50), as contrasted with "flesh and bone" that can refer to immortal, resurrected bodies (D&C 129:1–2; 130:22).[5] Accordingly, the image of blood is associated with life but specifically with the life of flesh and hence with mortality, whereas water, also a source of life, is frequently associated with spirit, as in John 7:39, where streams of living water are explicitly identified as his spirit.[6] The correlation of blood with mortality on the one hand and

and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 77–85; Monte Nyman, *I, Nephi, Wrote This Record* (Orem, UT: Granite, 2003), 140–49. This division sees the act of God's becoming the father of Jesus Christ as an act of condescension on his part. Jesus's dwelling on earth, associating with the poor and afflicted, being rejected and judged, and ultimately submitting to death is his own condescension. Given the high Christology of John, Mosiah 15, and Doctrine and Covenants 93, referring to the incarnation portrayed in 1 Nephi 12–20 as the condescension of the Father *and* the Son is probably appropriate, given that the divine Word condescended to become the man Jesus.

5. "After the resurrection from the dead our bodies will be spiritual bodies, but they will be bodies that are tangible, bodies that have been purified, but they will nevertheless be bodies of flesh and bones, but they will not be blood bodies, they will no longer be quickened by blood but quickened by the spirit which is eternal and they shall become immortal and shall never die." Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report*, April 1917, 63.

6. See John 7:39 where streams of living water are explicitly identified as his spirit. See also Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 324 n. 39; and Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel*

water with spiritual—even divine or eternal—life on the other can be consistently applied throughout John, and this has important implications for these symbols as they appear in some of the most important discourses of the Johannine Jesus.

Water to Wine (John 2:1–11)

Wine as a symbol for blood provides an additional level of interpretation for the first *sēmeion*, or "sign," in the Gospel of John: the miracle at the wedding at Cana. "Signs" or "miraculous signs" are, in fact, better translations for the Greek term *sēmeia* than "miracles." Rather than downplaying the reality and power of Jesus's miracles, this translation emphasizes what the *sēmeia* symbolize or teach about Jesus or what he can do rather than focusing on the acts themselves.[7] Looking past the historical details of the actual wedding feast itself, the symbolism of this miracle's context suggests a connection with the relationship of Jesus, the bridegroom, and the church, the bride. This idea is present in John 3:29 and Revelation 21:1–9 and is also echoed in D&C 65:3 and 133:10.[8] Scholarly exegesis has proposed a number of interpretations for the transmutation of water into fine wine. These

of John (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 253 and 257 n. 39, both of which cite Jewish precedents for the association of water and spirit.

7. For the symbolism, see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 103–11; Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 163–64.

8. Much has been written concerning the possible identity of the bridegroom at the wedding of Cana itself. An early third-century Latin preface to John identifies John the son of Zebedee as the groom, which may explain the role of Mary if John's mother Salome was her sister; see Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 97. In harmony with his preference for anonymity, John would not have been expected to name himself (indeed, he never even mentions the name of Jesus's mother). Although rarely suggested, Nathaniel, as a native of Cana (John 21:2), could have been the bridegroom, since his recent call (John 1:45–54), which immediately precedes the Cana pericope, might have occasioned the invitation of his new master and friends (although this does not explain the prominence of Mary in the account, unless here, too, there was some familial relationship). Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 1:448–49, suggested that "some member of the Holy Family," presumably another son of Mary, was being married. See also James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 144; and McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), 1:135–36. Earlier, nineteenth-century LDS proposals often focused on defining the role of Jesus at the wedding, although this does not fit as well

include the replacement of Jewish purification rituals by the blood of Christ, the theme of abundance (because the six ceremonial water pots would have yielded up to 120 gallons of high quality wine), and other sacramental imagery.[9] On the other hand, most LDS discussions of this miracle have tended to focus on the fact that Jesus, as Creator, had power over the elements.[10]

Nevertheless, the role of Mary in this pericope suggests the possibility of another layer of interpretation that is particularly significant if the wine here represents blood and hence mortality. In John's Gospel the mother of Jesus appears only here and at the foot of the cross in John 19, and in both instances she is unnamed. While efforts have been made to explain Jesus's reference to her as "woman" as a sign of respect or deference, there is little precedent for this in either Greek or the presumed original Aramaic words of Jesus.[11] Given John's avoidance of Mary's name, his use of the Greek vocative *gynai* may well have a generalizing effect, connecting Mary with Eve in Genesis 3:15 and the eschatological woman of Revelation 12.[12] Nevertheless, her being called "the mother of Jesus" four times in John 2:1–12 suggests that the actual relationship of Mary and Jesus is what is important in this passage.

Greek physiology posited that an embryo was formed of the father's seed and the mother's blood, an idea also found in Wisdom of Solomon 7:1–2: "In the womb of a mother was I molded *into flesh*, within the period of ten months, compacted *with blood*, from the seed of a man" (emphasis added).[13] Given that the children of God in John 1:12–13 are not born by blood or the flesh, Mary's role in the conception of Jesus was specifically to bring him into a mortal or

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the circumstances described in the text; see, for example, Orson Hyde, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:82 (6 October 1854).

9. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 112–18.

10. E.g., Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 146–49; McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 1:453–54; Fred E. Woods, "The Water Imagery in John's Gospel: Power, Purification, and Pedagogy," in *The Lord of the Gospels*, ed. Bruce A. Van Orden and Brent L. Top (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 192.

11. Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 158–59.

12. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 12; Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 89.

13. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 99; Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 158.

earthly state. As Eve was the agent whereby mankind was brought into mortality, Mary was the means by which the premortal, spiritual, and divine Word became the earthly Jesus. As a result, the miracle of turning water into wine may actually be a symbol of the Incarnation.[14] This explains Mary's presence at the wedding, which is parallel to the appearance of the beautiful and fair virgin of 1 Nephi 11:13–20 (also unnamed) who is "the mother of the Son of God, *after the manner of the flesh*." If the miracle at Cana typifies the nativity for the Fourth Gospel, this "beginning of miracles" at one level actually points to the first miracle of Jesus's earthly ministry, his conception, revealing who he was and explaining how this sign "manifested his glory" to his disciples and led them to believe in him (John 2:11).

Water and Spirit (John 3:1–36)

Jesus's discourse with Nicodemus on the new birth (John 3:1–36) further develops the dichotomy between flesh—and implicitly blood—on the one hand, and water and spirit on the other. While John 3:5 is used as a proof text by Latter-day Saints to support the ritual necessity of water baptism and the subsequent receiving of the gift of the Holy Ghost, the Greek text of this verse makes an important, close connection between water and spirit: in the phrase *ex hydatos kai pneumatos*, the nouns for water and spirit are anarthrous (that is, appearing without definite articles) and are governed by a single preposition.[15] All men, having been born of flesh and blood, must now be born again, this time of water and spirit, for "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Significant for Johannine Christology is the fact that the earthly birth of Jesus, as the Only Begotten, was of both flesh and blood and water and spirit, the Word being clothed in flesh through the Incarnation.

14. Eric D. Huntsman, "The Lamb of God: Unique Aspects of the Passion Narrative in John," in *Behold the Lamb of God: The Fourth Annual BYU Religious Education Easter Conference,* ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel, Frank F. Judd Jr., and Thomas A. Wayment (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2008), 51–52.

15. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 131, who also points out the close parallel here with Matthew 1:20, "what is begotten in her [Mary] is of the Holy Spirit."

"Water Springing Up into Everlasting Life" (John 4:1–42)

In the discourse with the Samaritan woman at the well about the Water of Life (John 4:1–42), the presence of a woman (*gynē*) and the symbolism of drawing water connect this pericope with the miracle at Cana. There Jesus had instructed the Samaritan woman to "draw out" water from the pots, using a word (*antlēsate*) commonly employed for drawing water from wells.[16] Here, after Jesus told her that he could give her "living water" (John 4:10), she noted that the well was deep and that he had nothing with which to draw its water (*antlēma*). Jesus's famous response then connected both water and himself with a different quality of life than that sustained by earthly water: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14).

The expression for living water in Classical and New Testament Greek, *hydōr zōn*, can refer to flowing water fit to drink, which later, rabbinic teaching remembered as being considered pure for ritual purposes (Mishnah *Mikwaʾot* 1:1–8).[17] Compared to the water of cisterns or even wells, the Samaritan woman certainly found this type of water preferable, but the participle *zōn* can also refer to that which is life-producing or offers life.[18] Likewise, while the woman at first concentrated on the fact that because the water was "springing" or "bubbling up," she would not need to expend the effort to draw it as she did for the water at the well, the participle used here (*hallomenou*) has deeper connotations. In fact, *hallomai* is used only here to refer to the action of water; elsewhere it refers to leaping or jumping by human

16. Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "antleō"; Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 100.

17. See Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 230. While the ritual uses of water were overwhelmingly concerned with purification, see the interesting case of the "bitter" waters of Numbers 5:11–31.

18. Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "zaō," note in definition 4a that the participle is used figuratively with the water of a spring in contrast with stagnant water, which is *hydōr nekron*. Definition 5, however, associates it with things and persons that communicate divine life.

beings. Nevertheless, in the Septuagint it is used in connection with the spirit of God falling upon Samson and Saul (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:4; 1 Samuel 10:10).[19] Interpretations of the living water that Christ gives include Jesus's revelation and teaching on the one hand or the Spirit as imparted by Jesus on the other; this latter idea is explicit in John 7:38–39.[20] Nevertheless, the complete phrase "well of water, springing up into everlasting life" may refer to Jesus himself as the source of both spirit and life. In this regard, Old Testament references to Yahweh as the "fountain of life" (Psalm 36:9) and "the spring of living water" (Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13)[21] find support in LDS scripture in 1 Nephi 11:25: "And it came to pass that I beheld that the rod of iron, which my father had seen, was the word of God, which led to the fountain of living waters, or to the tree of life; which waters are a representation of the love of God; and I also beheld that the tree of life was a representation of the love of God." In the vision of Nephi, Jesus is the paramount example of the love of God—which, of course, finds a parallel in John 3:16–17—and the fruit of the tree, which is defined as the "greatest of all the gifts" in 1 Nephi 15:36. This seems to refer to the gift of eternal life itself (D&C 14:7). Likewise, Jesus, the fountain of living waters, gives those who come to him life—not just the kind of mortal life that physical water sustains but rather spiritual, eternal life.

Flesh and Blood (John 6:25–59)

Nowhere, perhaps, is the image of blood in John more powerfully used as a symbol than in Jesus's Discourse on the Bread of Life in John 6:26–59. In the second part of this discourse, Jesus moved from the earlier image of "bread come down from heaven" to the more jarring image of flesh and blood, concentrating on the central *act* of Jesus's work: his salvific death, and how believers appropriate it (6:51–59).[22]

19. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 178–80.
20. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 178–80.
21. Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 231.
22. Eric D. Huntsman, "The Bread of Life Sermon," in *From the Transfiguration to the Triumphal Entry*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006), 269–317.

Here Jesus solemnly declared, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (6:53–54). Modern, particularly Christian, readers—accustomed to the sacramental imagery of partaking of bread and either wine or water that represents the body and blood of Christ—may not always appreciate the impact of this imagery on its original audience given biblical injunctions against consuming blood.[23]

A sacramental interpretation of this section of the discourse may be appropriate, particularly since in the Gospel of John, no mention is made of the institution of the ordinance of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Nevertheless, comparisons between the sacrament of the Lord's supper and the flesh and blood section of the Bread of Life Discourse must be qualified because all sacramental references in the New Testament are to the body (*sōma:* Matthew 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24, 27, 29) of Jesus rather than specifically to the flesh (*sarx/sarka*: John 6:51, 53–55).[24] Although this distinction between body (*sōma*) and flesh (*sarx*) should not be pressed too far,[25] the combination of flesh *and blood* emphasizes that Jesus was speaking of his mortal body, because *flesh and blood* consistently refers to living, albeit mortal, bodies (Ether 3:8–9; see Leviticus 17:11–14; Ecclesiastes 14:19; 1 Corinthians 15:50), as contrasted with "flesh and bone," which can refer to immortal, resurrected bodies (D&C 129:1–2; 130:22). Thus John's use of the terms *flesh and blood* in the final section of the Bread of Life Discourse stresses the incarna-

23. Note that the Old Testament injunctions against drinking blood (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 19:26) were reaffirmed in the New Testament (Acts 15:30; 21:25).

24. See Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 331–32, especially n. 125, and Huntsman, "Bread of Life," 279–80. For the semantic ranges of the respective nouns, see Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "sarx" and "sōma."

25. 3 Nephi 18:28–29, for instance, speaks of partaking of the sacrament improperly as "partaking of *my flesh* and blood unworthily," although this may have particular reference to improperly trying to lay hold of the fruits of the atonement, being somewhat analogous to "crucifying the Lord afresh" (Hebrews 6:6) and even "assenting unto his death" (D&C 132:27). On the other hand, see also D&C 20:40, which refers to "administering the bread and wine—the emblems of the flesh and blood."

tion of the divine Word "in the flesh." Accordingly, "eating his flesh and drinking his blood" suggests that believers in Jesus must accept and internalize the fact that Jesus has really come in the flesh and that he, the Lamb of God, would sacrifice that mortal life for his people.[26]

Rivers of Living Water (John 7:37–39)

In the Second Temple period, Sukkot, or the Festival of Tabernacles, had taken on a number of ritual additions, including the drawing of water from the Gihon spring to be poured on the altar as part of the autumnal prayers for rain and the lighting of great lamps in the temple courtyards. Both of these practices gave occasions for symbolic statements by Jesus—namely, that he was the source of living waters, the life-giving spirit in John 7:37b–39, and the light of the world in John 8:12.[27] In the first of these, Jesus echoed his earlier words to the Samaritan woman at the well, saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37b–38).

This passage has notable difficulties, the first of which involves the punctuation and affects the antecedent of the genitive of possession in "out of his belly (*koilia*)," which some translations render as "heart." What is uncertain here is whether the Greek means, "Let anyone who believes in me come and drink! As scripture says, 'From *his* heart shall flow streams of living water'" (NJB); or "and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of *the believer's* heart shall flow rivers of living water'" (NRSV).[28]

The second problem arises from the scripture ostensibly cited, for which there is no obvious candidate in either the Masoretic Text or the Septuagint. However, if it is taken not as a direct citation but rather as a broad reference to the Mosaic story of water flowing from the rock (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:11; Deuteronomy 8:15; Psalm 105:41), which rock was a type of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4), then the source

26. Huntsman, "Bread of Life," 282–85.

27. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 326–29.

28. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 320–21; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 256; Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 374–78 (emphases added).

of the living waters would be Jesus, and this passage would be parallel to the earlier pericope of the woman at the well.[29]

John 7:39, however, connects living water closely with the spirit: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet *given* because that Jesus was not yet glorified."[30] The meaning of this verse has caused considerable discussion, both within and outside of LDS circles, although in this instance the KJV rendering, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet given," may have complicated the question further. The Greek text *oupō gar ēn pneuma*, literally rendered, simply states, "there was not yet spirit," without specifying that it was the Holy Ghost that was absent or that it was somehow not yet "given."

As noted above, in LDS theology, resurrected, glorified beings are not only tangible bodies of flesh and bone, they are also in a sense "spiritual" bodies because they are animated, sustained, and quickened by spirit rather than blood, the symbol of mortality. According to LDS Church president Joseph Fielding Smith, "After the resurrection from the dead our bodies will be spiritual bodies, but they will be bodies that are tangible, bodies that have been purified, but they will nevertheless be bodies of flesh and bones . . . they will not be blood bodies, they will no longer be quickened by blood but quickened by the spirit which is eternal and they shall become immortal and shall never die."[31] In this sense, prior to the death of Jesus's mortal body and his subsequent resurrection, there was not yet any animating, life-giving, or even resurrecting spirit for those to whom he would give eternal life. A final, possible aspect of Jesus's role in "giving life" might be discerned in the image of living water flowing *ek tēs koilias*, or "from his belly." While *koilia* generally refers to organs of nourishment, particularly the stomach, commentators have usually taken it in its metaphorical sense as the seat of emotions, feelings, and desires, which anciently were placed in the viscera or bowels but for

29. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 321–23.

30. Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 201.

31. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report*, April 1917, 63.

which modern English generally prefers "heart."[32] Nevertheless, there is another possibility, since *koilia* can refer to the womb or uterus,[33] as is the case in Luke 1:41, 44; 2:21; 11:27; 23:29; and especially in John 3:4. In these instances, of course, it is applied to a woman, but there may be some sense that as a woman gives birth to a child, so Jesus gives new birth to the believer.[34] Indeed, the sense that not only Jesus can pass on this eternal life but so can those who receive it in its fulness from him, which is suggested by the alternate punctuation and reading of John 7:38, is supported by restoration scripture, particularly D&C 132:19 and 24, which speak of "a continuation of the seeds forever and ever" and "eternal lives" (plural) in those who become candidates for exaltation.

Blood and Water (John 19:34–35)

The symbolism of blood and water comes to fruition at the end of the crucifixion scene: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and *forthwith came there out blood and water.* And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe" (John 19:34–35). The importance of this symbol is patent, as seen by John's eagerness to bear witness of it and stress that he is sharing this sign so that the reader might believe.[35] While scholarly exegesis has at times associated the water and blood here with "the water of baptism" (John 3:5) and "the blood of the Eucharist" (John 6:53, 54, 55–56),[36] there has been a recognition that the symbols are best viewed in accordance with John's use of the terms elsewhere, notably in the believer "not being born of blood" (John 1:13); to those who are born "of water and the spirit" (John 3:5); to "living water" as the gift of Christ (John 4:10–14); and to living waters as the spirit flowing from believers (or from Christ; John 7:38–39).[37] If blood indeed

32. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 323; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 257.

33. Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, s.v. "koilia."

34. See Matthew G. Ancell, "Blood and Water: Unity in the Gospel of John" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1998), 20.

35. Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 505.

36. Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 506.

37. Morris, *Gospel According to John*, 724–25.

does represent the source of mortal life (see again Genesis 9:4), and if water symbolizes the life-giving spirit that is the source of eternal life,[38] then this sign in fact reflects the dual nature of the Incarnate Word as both the mortal son of Mary (blood) and the Divine Son of God (water). However, the blood and water may have represented not just *who* Jesus was but *what* he did: as the sacrificial Lamb of God, his atoning blood flowed on the wood of the cross to save his people even as the blood of the paschal lambs stained the wooden door frames of the Israelites to deliver them from death on the first Passover. Nevertheless the water from Jesus's side suggests that the cross, a dead tree and symbol of cursing, also became a type of the tree of life and a source of blessings.[39] Thus, just as Old Testament visions featured rivers of healing, life-imbibing water issuing from millennial Jerusalem and its temple, which was the place of sacrifice (Ezekiel 47:1–12 and Zechariah 14:8), so now living waters flow from Jesus on the cross.

The flowing of water, and blood, from Jesus's "side" (*pleura*) here, however, may have further significance that parallels the rivers of water flowing from the *koilia* in John 7:38. Originally *pleura*, usually in the plural, referred to "ribs,"[40] and John here may be recalling the singular use of *pleura* in Genesis 2:22 LXX, where it referred to God forming Eve out of one of Adam's ribs, the idea being that somehow woman was born from man.[41] The fact that the atoning death of Jesus somehow "gave birth" to the eternal life of those who believe in him is supported by the presence of blood and water, which are elements that accompany the physical birth of a child.[42] These, together with spirit,

38. To be sure, ancient physiology posited that in addition to blood, the body contained other important fluids or "humors," including a clear liquid called *ichōr.* A divine form of this fluid, however, was also believed to be the special substance of the gods that flowed in their veins *instead* of blood; see Homer, *Iliad* 5.340; Plutarch, *Moralia* 180E, 341B; and the brief discussion of Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel*, 203. Given that resurrected bodies are bodies of flesh and bone and not flesh *and blood*, if symbolically water = spirit, the flowing water could, in fact, represent the quickening spirit that animates immortal beings.

39. Huntsman, "Lamb of God," 63–64.

40. H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), s.v. "pleura."

41. Brown, *Gospel According to John*, 935.

42. Ancell, "Blood and Water," 17.

are mentioned together in restoration scripture in Moses 6:59–60, where they are the means by which believers "are sanctified from sin, and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life in the world to come, even immortal glory." Thus, Jesus's unique status as the Divine Word made Flesh enabled him to "give birth" to his own flesh, providing them life both on earth and in the next. The idea of the fatherhood of Christ is particularly supported by another passage of LDS scripture, Mosiah 5:7: "Ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, *this day he hath spiritually begotten you*; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, *ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters*" (emphasis added).

This understanding gives Jesus's promise in John 14:18 new meaning: "I will not leave you comfortless [*orphanous*, literally "orphans"]: I will come to you," suggesting that he will come to be a father to us. According to LDS theology, God is the spiritual father of all men and women, just as our earthly parents gave us biological life. Through his infinite and eternal atonement, Jesus becomes yet another father for his saints, giving them eternal life. The image of water—or spiritual, eternal life—streaming from his belly or pouring from his side graphically illustrates this point with symbolism that is consistent with the use of blood and water throughout the Gospel of John.

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