

Isaiah 55:11 with New Creation Theme and the Servant of the Lord as Witnessed in Jesus in the Fourth Gospel¹

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Abstract

This essay is the second in a two-part series on the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel. The essays are based on the author's dissertation written under Professor Dan Lioy's supervision. In this particular essay, the analysis focuses on the connection between Yahweh's word (*rhēma*) in Isaiah 55:11 and his Servant as revealed in the person and works of Jesus Christ. In the redemptive sense of the new creation, Jesus fulfils the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah while embodying Yahweh's will contained in his (Yahweh's) word. It seems that the efficacy of Yahweh's word in Isaiah 55:11 to accomplish his will is witnessed in the fulfilment of the role of Yahweh's Servant in the person and works of Jesus Christ. At the same time, Jesus also assumes the role of the Creator-God in Isaiah.

Keywords

Creation theology; servant of the Lord; Isaiah; Fourth Gospel.

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1. Introduction

The Fourth Gospel portrays Jesus Christ as the incarnation of the Creator-Word. In the incarnation, Jesus seems to be fulfilling the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah, particularly as described in Isaiah 42:1–9. While fulfilling the Servant’s role, Jesus is also seen as embodying Yahweh’s word (*rhēma*), which contains his (Yahweh’s) creative will, in Isaiah 55:11. In other words, the efficacy of Yahweh’s *rhēma* in the new creation is witnessed in Jesus Christ and his works. Thus a connection occurs between Yahweh’s *rhēma* in Isaiah 55:11 and the description of Yahweh’s Servant in Isaiah 42.

This essay is the second in a series of two treatises based on the author’s dissertation on the theme of creation in the Fourth Gospel. In the current essay, the investigation concentrates on the connection between Yahweh’s creative word (*rhēma*) in Isaiah 55:11 and his Servant as revealed in the person and works of Jesus Christ.

The investigation begins with an analysis of Isaiah 55:11 with the new creation theme since a conceptualisation of the text can be beneficial for one’s understanding of the connection to the Servant in Isaiah. Following the conceptualisation is the main focus of the study. The section examines the connection between Isaiah 55:11 and the Servant of the Lord as revealed in the person and works of Jesus. Three examples demonstrate the connection, which presents Jesus as the Servant of the Lord, who is sent by God to accomplish the work of new creation. The discourse concludes with some theological implications.

2. Analysis of Isaiah 55:11 with New Creation Theme

Isaiah 55:11 is located within a passage that highlights the theme of repentance (55:6–13). The passage begins with a tripartite call to repent (vv. 6–7) followed by a tripartite substantiation of the call (vv. 8–9, 10–11, 12–13) with each part beginning with the explanatory ‘for’ (*ky*) (Motyer 1993:456). Motyer suggests the following structure:

- A A tripartite call (vv. 6–7)
 - A1 To seek the Lord (v. 6)
 - A2 To forsake sin (v. 7ab)
 - A3 To return to the Lord (v. 7cd)

- B A tripartite substantiation of the call (vv. 8–13)
 - B1 The distinctive/different divine nature (vv. 8–9)
 - B2 The fruit-bearing word (vv. 10–11)
 - B3 The assured future (vv. 12–13)

Isaiah 55:11 is part of the second illustration from nature, which is read together with verse 10. Motyer (1993:457) points out the parallel between ‘the life agency of rain and the effective word’, stating that ‘each has a heavenly origin and power of effectiveness and neither fails’. On the one hand, the origin of the word is more specific: ‘from my mouth’. On the other hand, the result is less specific and undefined: ‘which I purpose ... the thing for which I sent it’. It is clear that God’s word is ‘the unfailing agent of the will of God’. It is meant to accomplish repentance. Motyer notes that ‘the call to repent is a word of God bringing with it its own power of accomplishment’. God’s word ‘plants the seed of repentance in the heart and feeds the returning sinner with the blessed consequences repentance produces’ (p. 458).

The text highlights the effectiveness of Yahweh’s word in accomplishing what it is intended to do (cf. Friesen 2009:346–347; Motyer 1993:457–458; Young 1972:383). The word that comes from Yahweh’s mouth (Isa 55:11; cf. 45:23; 48:3) is efficacious to accomplish his intended purpose. For Isaiah, Yahweh’s word ‘is not primarily something with a content, but the instrument by means of which something is effected. God’s word is a word that does things. When God speaks, something comes about’ (Westermann 1969:289). One of Yahweh’s intended purposes, when he speaks, is the creation of the world, as seen in the Genesis creation account (Gen 1). Concerning this, Friesen (2009:346–347) comments: ‘The word calling for light flowed from God’s mouth’ and ‘The creation of light accomplished the purpose for which the word was spoken’. Isaiah brings this creation perspective beyond Genesis and introduces the idea of a new creation.

The context (Isa 55:6–13) indicates the idea of new creation in the redemptive and eschatological sense. The redemptive sense can be seen in the call to repent (Isa 55:6–7). The tripartite call (noted above) to repent—seek the Lord (v. 6), forsake sin and return to the Lord (v. 7)—is presented to the wicked ones so that God will have mercy on them and forgive them. This call to repent is, in a sense, creative because it involves God’s transforming act in dealing with human hearts. The eschatological sense of creation is signified in Isaiah 55:12–13, where nature is metaphorically depicted as bursting into jubilant singing and clapping of hands. Motyer (1993:458) asserts

that ‘the thrust of verses 12–13 is to encourage response [repentance] by affirming the joys that await, i.e. new life in a new world’. He points out that ‘the personal transformation’ noted in verse 12 is ‘surrounded by environmental transformations’. The language Isaiah uses indicates the reversal of the curse that followed sin (Gen 3:17f). ‘Thornbush’ and ‘briers’ disappear and are replaced by much friendlier plants. The nature of the fallen state is now depicted in the original order of nature intended by the Creator before the Fall. ‘The symbols of death and the curse are replaced by those of life’.

3. The Servant of the Lord as Witnessed in Jesus Christ

Hanson (1995:182) suggests that the Servant and Yahweh’s word (Isa 55:11) ‘play closely related roles in relation to God’s will’ in Isaiah 40–55. He points out the connection between Isaiah 53:10 and 55:11:

‘... the will of Yahweh will prosper/succeed [*ytslch*] by his [the Servant] hand’ (53:10)

‘... My word ... will prosper/succeed [*htslych*] in the thing for which I sent it’ (55:11)

The parallel seems to suggest that the accomplishing of Yahweh’s will contained in his word (*rhēma*) may be fulfilled in the person and works of the Servant. The Gospel of John depicts Jesus as assuming the tasks associated with the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. As such, he accomplishes the work of new creation the Father sends him to do. Three examples may demonstrate this fact: (1) the healing of the man born blind, (2) the raising of Lazarus and (3) the breathing of the Holy Spirit on his disciples in conjunction with Jesus’s commissioning of them.

3.1. The servant in the healing of the man born blind

The healing of the man born blind focuses on the revelation of God’s work. Jesus’s speech indicates that his motivation is ‘working the work’ (*ergazesthai ta erga*) of the One who sends him (*tou pempantos me*) while it is in the daytime. His speech depicts the sender-messenger motif (John 9:4) and him being the light of the world (v. 5) who gives sight to the blind. Jesus’s non-emphatic ‘I am’ statement (‘I am the light of the world’ [*phōs eimi tou kosmou*]) is uttered here in connection with working the works of God, implying that, as light, he reveals God’s work in renewing the life of the blind man.

Jesus’s action resembles the Creator’s act in the creation of Adam (Gen 2). His actions involve hands, mud and words of command. The

story casts Jesus in the Creator's role. Irenaeus, one of the earliest commentators of John, suggests that Jesus's use of mud to heal the blind man alludes to God's use of the dust of the ground in the creation of Adam in Genesis 2:7 (*Against Heresies* 5:15.2 [Schaff 1885, ANF 1:1338]; cf. Brodie 1993:347; Brown 1966, 1:372; Michaels 2010, exposition §III.M). However, some modern commentators are not comfortable with the suggestion. Barrett (1978:358), for instance, considers that a reading such as Irenaeus' is 'improbable'. The main reason for the dismissal is the difference in the Greek terms used to identify the materials (mud or dust) which Jesus uses in the healing (McDonough 2009:34). However, lexical analysis of the terms used in the OT, the Dead Sea Scroll and ancient Near Eastern texts supports Irenaeus' suggestion (Frayer-Griggs 2013:670; McDonough 2009:35). 'John portrays Jesus as standing firmly in place of the creator God, fashioning from the earth new eyes for the man born blind, bringing his portion of the creation to its intended fullness' (McDonough 2009:35).

As one reads through the story of the healing of the man born blind, several correspondences may be discerned between the context of the story and the description of the Servant's tasks in Isaiah. First, Jesus claims to be 'the light of the world' (John 9:5; cf. 8:12 [the emphatic expression of the same]). This claim comes right before Jesus performs the act of restoration to the blind man. The Servant of the Lord is said to be 'a light to the nations' in order to 'open blind eyes' (Isa 42:6, 7; cf. 49:6). The allusion is clear: 'light of the world' corresponds to 'light to the nations' and healing the man born blind alludes to the Servant opening blind eyes. Jesus's claim and action 'seem[s] to answer the Isaianic motif of the Servant as the "light to the nations"' (Hamilton 2007:154) and as one who 'open[s] blind eyes'. Jesus 'implicitly assumes the identity of the Servant' (Ball 1996:260).

The coming of light into darkness to enlighten humanity is typically a Messianic expression, particularly from Isaiah (9:2 [HB 9:1]; 42:6; 49:6; 60:1, 3; Mal 4:2) (cf. Köstenberger 2004:32, 35; Horbury 1998:92–93, 99–100). Similarly, the recovery of sight to the blind is Messianic (Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7; 61:1 LXX) (Köstenberger 2007:459). The Servant is called 'My Chosen One' by Yahweh in Isaiah 42:1 (cf. 41:8–9; 49:7), an expression which refers to the Messiah. In John's Gospel, Jesus is 'the light of the world' (John 8:12; 9:5). Some walk in the night (darkness) and need to be led to believe in the light and walk in it so that they may become children of light (cf. 11:9–10; 12:35–36). Jesus has come as a light in order to deliver from darkness those who believe him (12:46). Jesus's Messianic/Servant

function as 'light' resembles the expression of the Messianic text in Isaiah 9:2: 'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light'.

Second, Isaiah 42:3 depicts the Servant of the Lord as one who 'will not break a bruised reed' or 'put out a smouldering wick' but 'will faithfully bring justice'. He will demonstrate 'sensitivity to the weak (bruised reed) and sympathy to the faint (dimly burning wick)' (Friesen 2009:249). Correspondingly, Jesus does not 'break' the already 'bruised' man or 'put out' what is left of him after he was thrown out from the synagogue by the Pharisees. In keeping with the portrait of the good shepherd in the ensuing discourse (Ridderbos 1997:347), Jesus takes the initiative to find him and 'brought him to decisive and knowledgeable faith' (Carson 1991:375). Jesus faithfully brings justice to the man by saying that he comes into the world for judgement in order that those who do not see will see and those who see will become blind (John 9:39). Thus, he implicitly brings justice to the man who was blind by declaring that he can now see spiritual truth concerning him as the Son of Man that the Pharisees cannot see (cf. 9:35).

Third, Jesus speaks of him doing the work of 'him who sent me' (John 9:4) as a prelude speech to the act of healing of the man born blind. Then, in verse 5 he claims to be the light of the world, which seems to allude to the calling of the Servant by Yahweh in Isaiah 42. The Lord, who is identified as Creator (Isa 42:5), calls the Servant 'for a righteous purpose' (42:6), indicating that the call is without dubious intent (Oswalt 1998:117). Although the passage in Isaiah 42:1–9 does not explicitly employ the term for 'sending', the language indicates that the call of the Servant is for a mission. Therefore, it seems appropriate to say that Jesus and the Servant are both called and 'sent' for a mission.

It is intriguing to note, however, that in this story, Jesus is also depicted as uttering efficacious words. He instructed (*eipen*) the man to go (*hupage*, imperative) and wash (*nipsai*, imperative) in the pool of Siloam (meaning 'Sent'). Both action and words of command are present in the whole process of healing. The man goes to the pool as instructed and comes back seeing (*blepōn*). Jesus's instruction is met with the man's obedience and an act of faith. An interesting wordplay occurs here. The Father sends Jesus. Now he is sending the man to the pool which carries the name 'Sent'.

3.2. The servant in the raising of Lazarus

The raising of Lazarus to life reveals the truthfulness of Jesus's claim: 'I am the resurrection and the life' (*egō eimi hē anastasis kai hē zōē*) (John 11:25). Life is in Jesus (1:4) and it is his prerogative to give to anyone he wishes (5:21). Lazarus' resurrection is a manifestation of God's glory and the glorification of the Son (11:4, 40). By raising a dead person, Jesus demonstrates God's creative power. He wants the crowd who witnesses the event to know his true identity—the Messiah whom the Father has sent (11:42). As the Sent One of the Father, Jesus acts as one with the Father in restoring life to Lazarus. He acts the role of a Creator.

Jesus calls Lazarus out with words of command: 'Lazarus, come out' (John 11:43). His shout of command is 'wonderfully succinct' (Morris 1995:498, note 89; cf. Barrett 1978:403) and one 'of raw authority' (Burge 2000:320). Life comes back to the dead body. The Creator-Word raises the dead through his life-giving words. The power of his voice expresses 'the power of God by which the dead are brought to life' (Ridderbos 1997:406). He can bring back life because he is the Creator of life, exercising his 'Creator-like power' (Brodie 1993:397).

The entire process implies a reconstruction and renewal of the decomposing body. The story emphasises the truth that death is not the end of life for those who believe in Christ. They experience a renewal of life. As illustrated by Jesus's command to 'unbind' (*lusate*, aorist imperative) Lazarus and to 'let him go' (*aphete auton hupagein*) (John 11:44), the renewed spiritual life will receive freedom from sin, which binds them, and the gift of eternal life.

The main correspondence one can discern between the story of the raising of the dead Lazarus to life and the portrayal of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah is in Jesus's command for Lazarus to come out and the proclamation of his (Lazarus) release. Jesus commands Lazarus, 'Come forth' (John 11:43) and when Lazarus has come out, he proclaims, 'Loose him and let him go' (v. 44). Hamilton (2007:157–158) suggests that this proclamation of Jesus is 'reminiscent of Isaiah's proclamation that the Servant would say 'to those who are bound, go forth, and to those who are in darkness, show yourselves' (Isa 49:9)'. The indication that Lazarus 'came out' (John 11:44) and the phrase 'go forth' (Isa 49:9) employ the same Greek verb, *exerchomai*.

The text in Isaiah 49:9 is not a direct creation text, but the context which speaks of the Servant does refer to Yahweh as speaking in his role as Creator 'who formed me from the womb' (49:5). Furthermore, in another Servant passage (42:1–9), the idea that the Servant

releases prisoners from the ‘dungeon’, those that sit ‘in darkness from the prison house’ (42:7), seems to parallel the idea in 49:9. Unlike the utterance in 49:9, Yahweh, in his identity as Creator, utters the words in 42:7. Thus, when one associates Isaiah 49:9 with the context of 42:7, a direct creation connotation emerges, which suggests that the release from the bondage of darkness is a creative work Yahweh does through the Servant. The implication of the story of Lazarus is that the raising of the dead Lazarus to life is a creative work done by Jesus, the Creator-Word (cf. 1:3, 10).

As noted in the previous example, ‘light’ and being called ‘to be sent’ for a mission are motifs that have been associated with the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. One can see the same motifs in the story of the restoration of Lazarus to life. The context of the story depicts Jesus as speaking of one being able to walk and not stumbling because he walks during the day and sees the light (John 11:9; cf. 8:12; 9:5) and one who stumbles because he walks in the night and the light is not in him (11:10; cf. 12:35). Jesus utters his prayer so that the crowds who stand there may believe that the Father sends him (11:42). Both motifs—‘light’ and being ‘sent’—provide links that could indicate an Isaianic influence on John’s portrayal of Jesus as Creator in the story of the raising of Lazarus.

The restoration of Lazarus to life is possible because Jesus is the source of life (cf. John 5:21, 26). Yahweh is identified as the Creator of the cosmos and humankind in Isaiah 42:5. He gives ‘breath’ (*nshmh*; LXX: *pnoēn*) and ‘spirit’ (*rwch*; LXX: *pneuma*) to the people who live on the earth he created. It is instructive to note here that the giving of life to Lazarus does not assume any of the tasks of the Servant of the Lord, although his (the Servant) tasks involve redemption. The giving of life is Yahweh’s work. Moreover, the giving of life through Jesus’s utterance resembles the efficacy of Yahweh’s word in Isaiah 55:11. In other words, Jesus assumes Yahweh’s role in Isaiah 42:5–9 when he raises Lazarus to life.

3.3. The servant in the sending of the disciples and breathing of the Holy Spirit

In Jesus’s first post-resurrection appearance to his disciples, he greets his disciples twice saying, ‘peace be to you’ (*eirēnē humin*) (John 20:19, 21). The double greetings seem to signal that what comes after the greetings is significant. The first greeting is followed by Jesus showing his hands and side, resulting in the disciples’ rejoicing. The second greeting is followed by Jesus’s ‘sending’ (*pempō*) of his disciples in parallel with the Father’s ‘sending’ (*apostellō*) of

him (v. 21). Coloe (2011:9–10) suggests that the first ‘peace’ greeting focuses ‘on the believer’s relationship to Jesus’ while the second focuses ‘on the believer’s relationship to the world, as the agent of Jesus in the world’.

Jesus’s next act is one that alludes to the Creator’s act of breathing (Heb: *nphch*; LXX: *emphusaō*) into Adam the breath of life in Genesis 2:7. Jesus ‘breathes’ (*enephusēsen*) on his disciples and commands them to ‘receive’ (*labete*) the Holy Spirit (v. 22). Brown (2010:282) asserts that this act of breathing is ‘the final and most clearly recognized allusion to Genesis 2’ and that ‘virtually all commentators understand John to be echoing the moment in Gen 2:7’ (e.g. Beasley-Murray 1999:380–381; Brodie 1993:569; Carson 1991:651; Lincoln 2005:499; Hoskyns 1920:216; Kesich 1982:167).

As noted, Genesis 2:7 LXX employs the verb *emphusaō* to convey God’s breathing into Adam the breath of life (*pnoēn zōēs*). John uses the same verb *emphusaō* to express Jesus’s breathing of the Holy Spirit (*pneuma hagion*) to his disciples. The word *emphusaō* is an unusual term—occurring only 11 times in the LXX and a *hapax* in the NT. John’s use of it in 20:22 ‘clearly echoes the first story of human enlivenment in Genesis 2’ (Brown 2010:282). Thus, ‘John wants us to see here an act of creation’ (Pryor 1992:89). However, since the Holy Spirit is involved (cf. Ezek 37:9), Jesus’s breathing on the disciples is also seen as ‘the beginning of the new creation, the awakening of the dead’ in spiritual terms (Carson 1991:651; cf. Barrett 1978:570; Brodie 1993:569; Keener 2003, 2:1204); Morris 1995:747, n. 58; Wright 2004, 2:150). Jesus has the power to give life in its fullness through the Holy Spirit. The restoration of life in its fullness is possible in the new creation.

In addition to the giving of the Holy Spirit, Jesus gives his disciples the authority to forgive and retain sins (John 20:23). The forgiving and retaining of sins is a divine work of redemption, which Jesus now entrusts to the disciples. Rae (2008) asserts that ‘the exercise of that authority, in the name of Christ, is the redemptive extension of God’s creative work’ (p. 300). The church is to continue the pattern of new creation ‘because the Son has given his Spirit for the continuation of his work’ (p. 299). As part of the ‘sending’ of the disciples, the giving of authority provides the disciples with the assurance of the source of their mission and power as they work in the formation of a new people who are born of the Spirit and endowed with new, spiritual life.

There seem to be some links between John 20:22 and the story of the healing of the man born blind in John 9:1–7. Both incidents depict Jesus as performing an act that resembles the act of the Creator-God in the creation of man. Also, both contain the instruction of ‘sending’. In John 9:1–7, Jesus makes mud, apparently using his saliva and hands, rubs it on the man’s eyes and instructs (sends) him to wash in the pool of Siloam (meaning ‘Sent’). He identifies himself as the one whom the Father has sent to do his (Father’s) works (9:4). In John 20:22, Jesus speaks of the ‘sending’ of his disciples just as the Father has sent him, then he breathes the Spirit on them. In both cases, it seems, ‘Jesus’s authority to act as the sender is based on his close association with the One who sent him’ (Siliezar 2015:168–169). Thus, in portraying the resemblance of Jesus’s act of breathing the Holy Spirit with the act of the Creator-God in the creation of man (Gen 2:7), John also associates Jesus with the idea of ‘sending’.

Jesus’s breathing of the Holy Spirit on his disciples (John 20:21–23) may not be directly related to fulfilling the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah. Nevertheless, Jesus’s reiteration of the fact that the Father has sent him seems to evoke the calling of the Servant to accomplish the mission given to him.

Subsequently, Jesus modelled his act of ‘sending’ the disciples after the Father’s act of sending him. He now seems to assume the authority of God. Jesus’s acts of breathing the Holy Spirit and sending his disciples for a mission of redemption suggest that he may be assuming Yahweh’s role as one who gives ‘breath’/‘spirit’ (Isa 42:5) and calls the Servant for a mission (42:6).

Thus, when Jesus says, ‘As the Father has sent me, I also send you’ (John 20:21), he identifies himself with both the Servant of Isaiah, who has been associated with specific activities and the Creator-God, who called the Servant for a purpose. He identifies himself with the Servant by performing the Servant’s activities and with the Creator-God by sending his disciples to continue his work.

4. Conclusion and Implication

This study focused on analysing the connection between Yahweh’s creative word (*rhēma*) (Isa 55:11) and the role of Yahweh’s Servant as seen embodied in the person and works of Jesus Christ. The analysis began with an examination of Isaiah 55:11 with a new creation theme. It revealed that Isaiah 55:11, in context, depicted the new creation in the redemptive and eschatological sense. The redemptive sense portrayed Yahweh’s word as efficaciously uttered to accomplish his will for people’s repentance. It was pointed out

that the efficacy of Yahweh's word in accomplishing his will (Isa 55:11) paralleled the Servant's success in accomplishing Yahweh's will (53:10).

Three examples demonstrated the connection between Yahweh's word in Isaiah 55:11 and his Servant: (1) the giving of sight to the man born blind, (2) the restoration of life to Lazarus' dead body and (3) the breathing of the Holy Spirit on the disciples. The analysis of the examples revealed that Jesus fulfilled the role of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah while also embodying Yahweh's word (*rhēma*) containing his (Yahweh) will in Isaiah 55:11.

The connection presented several intriguing implications. First, it implied that what Yahweh's word accomplished was what the Servant of the Lord also accomplished. Since Yahweh's creative word accomplished his will in the new creation, the Servant also accomplished the work of the new creation. In the Gospel of John, Jesus was portrayed as one who came down from heaven to do God's will (John 6:38), which was to give life to the world (as implied in John 3:16; 6:39–40; 12:50; cf. 5:21, 26) through acts of the new creation. Thus, for instance, Jesus gave 'new life' to the man born blind by giving him sight both in physical and spiritual terms. He also restored life to Lazarus who had been dead. In both miraculous signs, the tasks and functions associated with the Servant of the Lord—that is, the light of the world, restoring the sight to the blind and instructing to 'release' and 'let go'—were taken up by Jesus.

Second, since Jesus also uttered words, the connection seemed to imply that Jesus assumed Yahweh's role as he (Yahweh) spoke to the Servant in his role as Creator of the world and humankind (Isa 42:5) and uttered his *rhēma* that accomplished his will (55:11). In John's Gospel, Jesus uttered words to accomplish miraculous feats. Thus, in the first example noted above, Jesus spoke to the man born blind as part of the whole process of restoring the man's sight, which implied an act of creation. He also 'sent' the man to the pool of 'Sent' to complete the process of healing. In the second example, Jesus uttered words that restored Lazarus to life. His utterance of the life-giving words resembled that of the creation in Genesis 1 (cf. Ezek 37). Similarly, the breathing on the disciples was a reminiscence of the breathing of the breath of life on Adam at creation. Moreover, in the same post-resurrection narrative, Jesus assumed the authority of sending the disciples in the same way as the Father had sent him.

Thus, Jesus took up a dual role—as the Servant and as the Creator-God—all at the same time. In assuming the role of the Servant, Jesus claimed to be 'the light of the world' (John 8:12; 9:5) and sent

by the Father (11:42; 20:21). He gave sight to the man born blind (9:6–7) and called Lazarus from the ‘bondage of darkness’ (11:43:44). In taking up Yahweh’s identity, Jesus called Lazarus from the grave—a ‘bondage of darkness’—by his creative words and gave him life (11:43:44). He also sent his disciples and rebreathed in them a new life through the Holy Spirit (20:21–23). In assuming one role (Servant), Jesus also took up another (Yahweh). As he embodied both roles, all tasks and functions associated with both identities coalesced in him.

This dual portrayal of Jesus could also be seen expressed in the interplay between Isaiah 55:11 and Jesus’s activities in the incarnation. Jesus, the Creator-Word, uttered words to effect miracles (e.g. the healing of the official’s son and the raising of Lazarus). Jesus’s words accomplished what they were intended to do. Jesus also performed the Father’s work and will, which were expressed through the miraculous signs, so that those who believed might have life. By performing the miraculous signs, Jesus seemed to embody all the will of the Lord in the word (*dbr*; LXX: *rhēma*) that went forth from Yahweh’s mouth. By uttering words that effected miracles, Jesus seemed to assume the role of Yahweh, whose word went forth like rain to accomplish his (Yahweh’s) will.

Finally, the connection implied that the creation theology of Isaiah had influenced the way Jesus, the Creator-Word, is portrayed in the Fourth Gospel. Both Yahweh’s *rhēma* and his Servant were themes coming from Isaiah and seemed to be related to the new creation motif. The Fourth Gospel has portrayed Jesus as the incarnation of the Creator-Word, who fulfilled the efficacy of Yahweh’s creative word as well as the tasks of the Servant of the Lord.

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