

Selection and Focus, Expansion and Integration in Biblical Studies

Sukmin Cho*

The Johannine Literature Studies of Korea (JLSK) started on December 13, 2014, when seven individuals who specialized in Johannine literature gathered under the name of the JLSK to present research papers. As time has passed, this research group has spent a decade continuing its research and presentations and has expanded. We are excited and hopeful as we look forward to the publication of the inaugural issue of the international academic journal “The Journal of Biblical and Ancient Studies (JBAS)” in June 2025.

Selection and Focus

Biblical studies are like the deep sea, so vast and profound that their depth and breadth are hard to grasp. It is clear that biblical studies are never easy, as trying to delve deeply into one specific area reveals an endless complexity. Even if one specializes in Johannine literature, it can only be a minuscule part when viewed in light of the entirety of biblical studies, which is vast like the deep sea. Moreover, considering the background of

* The founding president of the Johannine Literature Studies of Korea; Retired Professor at Ezra Bible Institute for Graduate Studies. For more on Sukmin Cho’s academic profile, see his ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6235-1178>.

biblical studies and the closely related field of ancient literature, it seems evident that biblical studies is an area of scholarship that cannot be fully comprehended or researched by any single individual.

In this regard, the JLSK has selectively focused its research and presentations on the Johannine literature (Gospel of John, Johannine Epistles, Revelation) within the New Testament. Choosing the field of Johannine literature for in-depth investigation amidst the deep sea of biblical studies, and uncovering its depths to lay the groundwork for a broader understanding and interpretation, is very important.

Presenting new methodologies and creative approaches to appropriately understand and research Johannine literature, as well as identifying correlations between various ancient texts and Johannine literature to derive and publish results, remains a significant interpretive task. The unresolved enigmas of the Gospel of John, such as the authorship and dating issues, the purpose of the Gospel, and the challenges of the Johannine community, are not research topics that can be easily overlooked.

Research aimed at understanding the relationship between the Gospel of John and the Johannine epistles, as well as the independent study of the epistles themselves and their connections to various letters in the Bible, should continue to be encouraged. In the case of the Book of Revelation, there are many unresolved research topics, such as the authorship and date of writing, its relationship to apocalyptic literature, the symbolism and interpretation of numbers, and the interpretations and uses of the Revelation by heretical groups, which are all theological subjects necessitating focused study.

Expansion and Integration

However, such selective research and presentations, when viewed from the perspective of biblical studies as a whole, rely on the diligent research outcomes of other scholars and are closely connected to the results of the careful observations and studies of various ancient literature researchers. In this regard, the choice and focus should expand the scope of research to encompass the entire Old and New Testaments and ancient literatures, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the works of Philo and Josephus, as well as early Church Fathers' writings.

The JBAS published with the support of the Johannine Literature Studies in Korea, will serve as a key opportunity to broaden and deepen research on Johannine literature. As an international journal, the JBAS is expected to become a significant foundation for biblical studies research, as scholars from various countries specializing in biblical studies and ancient literature actively participate and share their research outcomes.

If domestic and international biblical scholars and specialists in ancient literature achieve a diverse and harmonious dialogue through their creative research findings, biblical studies will establish a newly expanded interpretative horizon. The various research outcomes related to biblical studies and ancient literature will broaden the understanding of biblical studies and lead to new discoveries in various fields.

Research findings that involve different languages, such as Ancient Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, Akkadian, Coptic, and various approaches and interpretations of texts will expand the understanding of biblical studies, ultimately integrating the total research results to unfold an interpretive

horizon beyond expectations. From the perspective of academic understanding, an expanded research foundation that broadens the scope of a particular field's research and understanding will lead to the presentation of a new understanding and interpretation by integrating results from various academic studies.

The international academic journal JBAS positions itself as an academic tool that meets these expectations, and is expected to provide fruitful results beneficial to churches and Christians around the world through lively academic communication and collaborative foundations with scholars from various countries. In this regard, I sincerely thank and congratulate the Johannine Literature Studies in Korea for being able to publish the JBAS.

(Received: June 11, 2025)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.23364/JBAS.2025.1.1.55840>