

temple connections as seen in Isaiah 61:6, which states, “you will be called priests of the Lord.”⁴⁹

Revelation 5:10 and 20:6 also make it clear that the righteous Saints will not only be priests but also rulers. The Doctrine and Covenants affirms this aspect of celestial glory, stating that the Saints will “be made rulers over many kingdoms” (D&C 78:15). John’s words, then, focus on two distinct privileges: the Savior’s followers hold not only ecclesiastical authority but also civil and, therefore, will preside over both the religious and political orders of heaven.⁵⁰ In doing so, they hold the fullness of priesthood power, all that a man can have in mortality.⁵¹

John’s use of the aorist ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς (*epoiēsen hēmas*), “made us,” is arresting. The tense shows that the Lord had already made some of those to whom John was writing kings and priests. Thus, they had attained a royal and priestly status (see also 5:10; 20:4). In order to do so, they would have had to have received the fullness of the priesthood, for those “holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood,” Joseph Smith taught, “are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings.”⁵² Women would have been included. As Joseph Fielding Smith taught, both genders “have been promised that they shall become sons and daughters of God, joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and if they have been true to the commandments and covenants the Lord has given us, to be kings and priests and queens and priestesses, possessing the fulness of the blessings of the celestial kingdom.”⁵³ These offices are bestowed only to those individuals who have participated in all the ordinances of the house of the Lord, and, thereby, have been sealed

into eternal life (see D&C 131:5–6).⁵⁴ John’s wording suggests that there were those in John’s audience who had achieved this status.

Unto God and his Father/to his God and Father:

The reading of this verse in the KJV suggests that Elohim had a father. The JST changes the text to read, “unto God his Father,” thus clarifying that Elohim was the Savior’s father. However, ten years after making this change, due to further understanding concerning the divine mysteries, Joseph Smith stated that the KJV reading, “God [meaning Elohim] and his Father,” was correct for “John discovered that God the Father of Jesus Christ had a Father, [and] you may suppose he had a father also.” He went on to say that the ancient Apostles taught the plurality of Gods, having discovered for themselves “that there were Gods above” our own.⁵⁵

to him be glory and dominion for ever/To him be glory and power forever:

John closed this portion of his epistle with a doxology, that is, a psalm of praise, saying, “To him be glory and power forever and ever, amen” (v. 6). The praise focuses on two areas. The first is glory (δόξα, *doxa*). Here the word denotes honor or renown and looks to the Savior’s reputation for what he is and what he has done. The second area is power, or, as, the KJV has it, dominion. The Greek word (κράτος, *kratos*) carries the idea of resident strength and, therefore, internal might or power. Here it reflects the Savior’s power or sovereignty over his creation. Thus, the doxology expresses the hope for the Lord’s continued high reputation and rule over his dominion. It is easy to see why the Saints would want the Savior to have these, for only through them would they find their ultimate reward.

1:7 The JST adds to John’s hymn the exclamation, “he cometh in the clouds with ten thousands of his saints in the kingdom” (v. 7). The words point to the greatness of Christ’s entourage, which will be

49. See commentary on chapters 2 and 3.

50. Ancient authorities are well aware of the two distinctions and privileges to which John refers. The idea of becoming priests and kings unto God comes out of Ex. 29:6 and Isa. 61:5–6. It is repeated in 1 Pet. 2:9. The Greek of the LXX and of 1 Pet. would translate the phrase as “a kingdom of priests,” the idea being that the Savior has set up his kingdom which is composed of those who hold his priesthood.

51. On the significance of this, see discussion in the Introduction, “The Fullness of the Priesthood.”

52. *TPJS*, 322.

53. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957–66), 4:61.

54. For further discussion, see Joseph Smith, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 302–6; *DNTC*, 3:436. That the same program is still going on is evident from the Lord’s admonition in D&C 78:15, where he admonishes the Saints to be obedient “that you may come up unto the crown prepared for you, and be made rulers over many kingdoms.”

55. *TPJS*, 370.