

illuminating the Text of the Doctrine and Covenants through the Gospel of John

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It may surprise some readers of the Doctrine and Covenants just how prominent a role the Bible plays in the construction of the revelations. Philip Barlow has observed how Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century revelations "remained intimately linked to the Bible. Some dealt directly with biblical themes, and quoted or closely paraphrased traditional scripture. All were saturated with KJV words, phrases, and concepts: for every two verses of the revelations recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, approximately three phrases or clauses parallel some KJV phrase or clause."¹ Although the Lord revealed through Joseph Smith information and doctrines designed for this dispensation, he employed the Bible as a means of constructing the revelations, utilizing ancient biblical "building blocks" to create a modern mosaic. Some of these "building blocks" are lengthy quotations, such as the excerpts from the book of Revelation found in section 88. Other occurrences may be quotations or paraphrases of only four or five words. Some of the clearest of these quotations and allusions (over three hundred in all) in the Doctrine and Covenants come from the Gospel of John, the Gospel most filled with unique

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language and imagery.² This paper will explore the possibility that one key to interpreting the Doctrine and Covenants may come through isolating and examining the many passages of the Bible, specifically from the Gospel of John, found throughout the Doctrine and Covenants. While it is common to view Restoration scripture as something of a window into the Bible, this method reverses that interpretive approach and suggests that there is value in using the Bible as a window into the Doctrine and Covenants. In particular, this paper will examine how both Johannine Christology and anthropology are employed throughout the revelations as a way of crafting a unique Mormon theology.³

Christology

The Word. John begins his Gospel with a prologue known as the *logos* hymn, a rather dense section of 18 verses through which John attempted to poetically illustrate the divine nature of Jesus Christ prior to his arrival on earth—Jesus is the preexistent *logos*, or “Word,” who mediates between the transcendent God and the mortal realm of earth.⁴ Throughout these eighteen verses, the grand images of light and darkness, reception and rejection, life and glory are woven into the tale of the descent of the Word to earth, and they signify the divine beginnings of Christ’s earthly ministry. In a way, John’s prologue represents an encapsulation of the entire Gospel, “that in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth the glory of God was uniquely and perfectly disclosed.”⁵

In the Doctrine and Covenants, several passages refer directly (with small changes) to the prologue of John’s Gospel. Seven of these—D&C 6:21; 10:57–58; 11:11, 29; 34:2; 39:2–3; 45:7–8; and 88:48–49—utilize the language of John 1:5 and 11, which read: “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” A closer examination of the sections in which this language occurs suggests that the choice of language may have significance. First, there is the sense of new creation implicit throughout the prologue, particularly the allusion to Genesis 1:1 in John 1:1. By invoking the language of the prologue, the Lord is announcing that a similar creation is taking place; just as the era of Christianity was a “new creation” in the midst of the world of the Jews, the Mormon epoch will be a “new creation” amongst a world of Christians. The fact that in both verses there is a scene with a rejected figure, the “light” in

John 1:5 and the Word himself in John 1:11, reinforces the idea of a restoration following a period of apostasy, or “darkness.”

This restoration allusion finds further support through a more literal reading of John 1:11. In Greek, this verse contains a play on words. It could be rendered “He came unto his own *things* [τὰ ἴδια] and his own *people* [οἱ ἴδιοι] received him not.” While for John, this wordplay may have represented the Jewish rejection of Jesus, for Joseph Smith, it works equally well in signifying the Christian rejection of Jesus, who must once again restore his gospel following a period of “darkness.” Finally, with the exception of section 88, the revelations in which the language of John 1:1–18 is found all pertain to the growth and expansion of the early Church. This may indicate that the appropriation of these specific verses was intended to signify for the readers that a new Christianity, or a second attempt by the Word to “dwell among us,” was about to commence. This idea is bolstered by the presence of several imperfect verbs (signifying uncompleted action) in John 1:1–4, suggesting an action that has begun but is not yet completed. Thus this hymn becomes the ideal pericope for the Restoration, as it signifies that this creative process is still ongoing and has not been fully completed.

“*I Am.*” One of the peculiar qualities of John’s Gospel is his use of the title “*I Am.*” Throughout the Fourth Gospel, Jesus consistently identifies himself with the phrase “*I Am*” followed by some variation of a predicate nominative. For example, to a crowd of hungry listeners, Jesus declared, “*I am* [εγὼ εἰμι] the bread of life” (John 6:35). To the Apostles, gathered together for one last feast, Jesus declared, “*I am* the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). Other instances of the use of “*I Am*” include “light of the world” (John 8:12), the “good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14), “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25), and the “true vine” (John 15:1, 5). At times, Jesus didn’t even bother adding a predicate nominative, declaring simply, “*I Am,*” as he does with the Samaritan woman (John 4:26), when announcing that “before Abraham was, *I am*” (John 8:58), or when facing the officers sent to arrest him (see John 18:5, 8). This identification of Jesus as “*I Am*” held great sacral significance for the Jews. In the Septuagint account of Moses’ theophany at the burning bush, Jehovah identified himself as *egō eimi ho on*, literally “*I am the one who exists*” (Exodus 3:14).⁶ Isaiah employed the “*I Am*” as a more explicit theological proclamation: “*I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was*

no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand: I will work, and who shall let it?" (Isaiah 43:11–13). The fact that Jesus adopts this same terminology serves to connect him with the Old Testament deity,⁷ either as the Messiah or Jehovah himself.⁸

The Jesus who reveals himself to Joseph Smith also employs this same "I Am" title.⁹ At various times throughout the Doctrine and Covenants, he identifies himself as "I am" plus "Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (D&C 6:21; 10:57; 14:9; 35:2; 49:28; 51:20), "the light" (D&C 10:58; 11:11), "the true light" (D&C 88:50), "the life and the light" (D&C 11:28), "the light and the life" (D&C 12:9; 34:2; 45:7), "the good shepherd" (D&C 50:44), "the Great I Am" (D&C 29:1; 38:1; 39:1), "endless" (D&C 19:4, 10), "your advocate" (D&C 29:5; 32:3; 110:4), "the stone of Israel" (D&C 50:44), "the first and the last" (D&C 110:4), "he who said—Other sheep have I which are not of this fold" (D&C 10:59), "the beginning and the end" (D&C 19:1; 35:1; 38:1; 45:7), and "the Alpha and Omega" (D&C 19:1; 45:7; 63:60; 68:35; 84:120; 112:34; 132:66). It could be argued that since Jesus is speaking in the first person in these revelations, the use of "I am" is merely a grammatical necessity. However, many of the usages of "I am" in the revelations are distinctly Johannine and thus point the readers directly toward the "I Am" formula. For example, the references to "light" and "life" reflect the language of John's prologue, particularly John 1:4. The predicate nominative "good shepherd" in D&C 50:44 evokes John 10:11 and 14, while the somewhat awkward "I am he who said—Other sheep have I which are not of this fold" in D&C 10:59 explicitly brings to mind John 10:16. Additionally, the specific usage of "the Great I Am" and "the stone of Israel" recalls usages of "I Am" in the Old Testament.¹⁰

All in all, there are over thirty occurrences of the "I Am" formula found throughout the Doctrine and Covenants. Understood as the divine title of the Johannine Jesus, a passage from D&C 11:28–29 states, "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world. I am the same who came unto mine own and mine own received me not." This passage can now be understood as working on multiple levels. First, the title "I am" identifies the speaker with the Old Testament God or the Messiah. Second, the predicate nominative and subsequent appositive, "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," identifies the speaker with the New Testament God. The fact that the

speaker also incorporates the phrase “the life and light of the world,” a passage clearly invoking John’s preface, appropriates the creative “Word” into this figure as well. Finally, this speaker is revealing himself through Joseph Smith. The combination of Old Testament, New Testament, and Restoration elements in these verses serves to claim that the divine figure speaking through Joseph Smith is the Word, Jehovah, the Jewish Messiah, and Jesus Christ. Interestingly, this type of language in the revelations both appropriates the entire biblical tradition and constrains the reader to accept the revelation produced through Joseph Smith as either true revelation or gross blasphemy. Additionally, if the usage of the “I Am” language in the Gospel of John was to signify to potential believers that Jesus was the incarnation or representation of the Old Testament God, then its recurrence in latter-day revelation may have a similar intent. Potential converts to Mormonism are invited to listen to the words of God and find at the head of the Church the same divine being who occupies the Fourth Gospel, again linking together the Latter-day Saint Jesus, the Christian Jesus, and the Jewish Jehovah.¹¹

Anthropology

Sons of God. We have seen how the Doctrine and Covenants utilizes the Johannine prologue as a means of correlating the Jesus of the New Testament with the Jesus of the Restoration. Now we turn to examining how Johannine language in the revelations explicates the true nature of humankind. In four revelations, sections 11, 34, 39, and 45, the references to John 1:5 and 11 that were examined previously are followed up by another verse from John’s prologue, John 1:12, which reads: “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons¹² of God, even to them that believe on his name.”¹³ It is difficult to know exactly what John meant by “sons of God,” and some commentators have chosen to interpret this passage as a spiritual awakening or rebirth. F. F. Bruce writes that “to enter God’s family one must receive his Word—in other terms, one must believe in his name.”¹⁴

Furthermore, in Doctrine and Covenants 34:3, Christ says to Orson Hyde, “[I am he] who so loved the world that he gave his own life, that as many as would believe might become the sons of God. Wherefore you are my son,” suggesting that a form of belief in Jesus’ name is sufficient to be called his son or daughter.¹⁵ In D&C 35:2, Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge are told that the “sons of God” are “even as many as will believe on [Christ’s]

name.” Section 39, given to James Covill in January 1831, specifies that receiving Jesus means to receive the gospel, specifically repentance, baptism, and the Holy Ghost (D&C 39:5–6). In both the Book of Mormon and at least the Restoration revelations received by March 1831, Joseph seems to have understood the title “son of God” to refer to a spiritual renewal brought about by accepting the redemption of Jesus Christ.¹⁶ Whereas the prologue of John’s Gospel announced to the first-century world that a new era had dawned, one in which God “was made flesh” and even “dwelt among us,” the strong presence of the prologue in these early revelations signified a similar new era, where God would once again dwell with men and symbolically make them his sons.

However, the concept of becoming the “sons of God” has meaning beyond a spiritual renewal. Raymond Brown has noted that it is in the Gospel of John that “our present state as God’s children on this earth comes out most clearly.”¹⁷ Augustine, bishop of Hippo, wrote, “But he himself that justifies also deifies, for by justifying he makes sons of God. ‘For he has given them power to become the sons of God.’ If then we have been made sons of god, we have also been made gods.”¹⁸ There is present in the Gospel of John the idea that the divinity of God overflows to mankind and that through following Jesus Christ, we somehow tap into that mystical union. Jesus’ intercessory prayer, spoken at the point at which his hour had come, alludes to this relationship. Prior to entering into the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed “that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one” (John 17:21–22).

This second hermeneutical model for understanding John 1:12 becomes particularly relevant in the one allusion to John’s prologue that has not been examined yet, D&C 88:48–50, which reads:

I say unto you, he hath seen him; nevertheless, he who came unto his own was not comprehended. The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; nevertheless, the day shall come when you shall comprehend even God, being quickened in him and by him. Then shall ye know that ye have seen me, that I am, and that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me; otherwise ye could not abound.

Here the reader notes the appropriation of language from the prologue, with its image of darkness and light, but this usage has now moved beyond the use of a verbatim quotation to signify a new age. These verses promise to believers a time when they will be “quickened in him and by him,” where they will know that “[Christ is] the true light that is in [them], and that [they] are in [him].” This additional appropriation of the Johannine prologue hints at an emerging divine anthropology, similar to what Augustine had declared, that mankind shares some element with God and is to some extent literally one with both the Father and the Son. The emphasis of the Johannine language is no longer so much about a contrasting light and darkness but about the light that all believers have within them, originating in Christ and linking mankind with him. The Gospel of John, with its emphasis upon humankind’s divine nature, provides appropriate language for expressing this fundamental concept.

Exaltation. Starting in 1832, Joseph began to receive, in rapid succession, what Richard Bushman has termed the “four exaltation revelations,”¹⁹ specifically sections 76, 84, 88, and 93. As Joseph’s doctrinal insights grow and evolve through the course of these revelations, so does the prominence of Johannine language.²⁰ Sections 88 and 93 in particular demonstrate the influence of language and imagery from the Gospel of John. Section 88, termed “the Olive Leaf,” opens with the voice of the Lord proclaiming, “Wherefore, I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John” (v. 3). This verse refers to and even quotes from John 14:26, where Jesus had said, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Jesus clearly identifies this “Comforter” to be the Holy Spirit, whose task for the early Christian Church was to “bring to [their] remembrance” the words of Jesus, functioning as an additional witness that would point Christians toward the truth once Jesus had been resurrected and had ascended to the Father.

In section 88, this reference to a second “Comforter” evolves from the reception of a simple witness imparted through the Holy Ghost to a figure pivotal for obtaining exaltation. This “Holy Spirit of promise” is a “promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; Which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest

of all, through Jesus Christ his Son” (D&C 88:4–5). Joseph Smith would later issue the invitation to “Come to God weary him until he blesses you. . . . Obtain that holy Spirit of promise—Then you can be sealed to Eternal Life.”²¹ Joseph Smith elaborated further on the specific function of the Holy Spirit of promise, stating that it was one of the duties of the Holy Spirit to act as a “ratifier” or “sealer” of eternal covenants, and thus an important figure in the progression of men and women toward exaltation (D&C 132:7).

Section 93, also received in 1833, again adopts and modifies Johannine scripture specifically to demonstrate the pathway to individual salvation. Notice how the language from the Gospel of John (in italics) is carefully woven throughout the first fifteen verses of section 93:

Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and *know that I am* [John 8:28];

And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world [John 1:9];

And that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one [John 14:11]—

The Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world and *made flesh* my tabernacle, and *dwelt among* the sons of men [John 1:14].

I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest.

And John saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory, and the fulness of John’s record is hereafter to be revealed.

And he bore record, saying: I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was [John 1:1];

Therefore, *in the beginning the Word was* [John 1:1], for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation—

The light and the Redeemer of the world; the *Spirit of truth* [John 14:17; 16:13], who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and *in him was the life of men and the light of men* [John 1:4].

The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; *all things were made by him*, and through him, and of him [John 1:3].

And I, John, bear record that I *beheld his glory, as the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, even the Spirit of truth, which came and dwelt in the flesh, and dwelt among us* [John 1:14].

And I, John, saw that he received not of the fulness at the first, but received *grace for grace* [John 1:16];

And he received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness;

And thus he was called the Son of God, because he received not of the fulness at the first.

And I, John, bear record, and lo, the heavens were opened, *and the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and sat upon him* [John 1:32], and there came a voice out of heaven saying: This is my beloved Son.

In these opening verses of section 93, an assortment of verses originally located throughout the Gospel of John are reworked by God into a unique theological statement. In the Gospel of John, no mention is made about the Son not receiving of the fulness; rather, it is we who receive “grace for grace” due to our encounter with him. But the way the Johannine language of section 93 is recast now establishes that the Son was the party who received not of the fulness at first, and thus Jesus Christ progresses “grace to grace” until achieving a fulness.

A parallel scenario then follows. Just as Jesus progressed until partaking of the fulness, so men and women can progress in a similar fashion until they also receive of his fulness:

I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know what you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.

For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace.

And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn;

And all those who are begotten through me are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn. (D&C 93:19–22.)

Again, the revelations appropriate the *language* of John but have reshaped the *context*. What was an ancient hymn praising the divine, premortal glory of Jesus Christ has become in the latter days a fascinating elaboration of humankind's divine potential.

Eternal families. Finally, one additional place where the revelations utilize Johannine language to elaborate upon the doctrines of exaltation is section 132.²² In chapter 17 of John's Gospel, Jesus offered the "intercessory prayer," intended to formally announce that he "finished the work that [the Father] gave [him] to do" (John 17:4). He begins the prayer in the following manner: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:1-3). The latter verse, verse 3, provides a definition of eternal life, namely, to achieve knowledge of God and Jesus Christ. To provide this knowledge of the "only true God" was one of the stated purposes of Jesus' ministry: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. . . . He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:7, 9). Apparently, when people have gained this knowledge of the Father and the Son, they recognize the divinity that exists within themselves; they recognize that they share some unity with God and Jesus. It is the hope for this understanding and subsequent unification between God and his children that serves as the occasion for the prayer: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:21-23). Both the high Christology and the high anthropology of John come through explicitly in these verses: not only is Jesus "one" with the Father, but so are his children.

Once again, the language of John is adopted and refashioned in the text of the Doctrine and Covenants. Framed around a discussion of the Abrahamic covenant, section 132 elaborates on the nature of those who become exalted, specifically noting that those sealed "by the Holy Spirit of promise" will achieve a degree or kingdom of glory that "shall be a fulness and a continuation

of the seeds forever and ever” (D&C 132:19). This idea of a “continuation of the seeds” becomes for Joseph Smith the ultimate meaning in the Abrahamic covenant, the proper interpretation of the promise that “[God] will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore” (Genesis 22:17; see also 32:12). This promise was not restricted to the descendants of the patriarchs on earth but was also granted to all those who become exalted and begin to raise spiritual offspring of their own.²³ It is this vision of eternal increase referred to when, a few verses later, we read, “This is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law” (D&C 132:24). While Jesus’ statement in John 17:3 seemed to imply that “eternal life” meant knowing that one shared something with God and Jesus, that the potential for some sort of unity was available, D&C 132:24 goes beyond John. True knowledge of God and Jesus Christ comes through *eternal lives*, namely the propagation of eternal increase.²⁴ If one wants to truly *know* and *understand* what it is like to be God, then one must become exalted, create worlds, and bear the children to inhabit those worlds, for that is the teleological nature of God’s existence, his “work and his glory” (Moses 1:39).

Conclusion

This paper began with the intention of demonstrating that an examination of places where the Doctrine and Covenants utilized passages from the Gospel of John would provide one window through which we could observe and interpret the text. What of use has been unearthed from this interpretation? The Johannine prologue and the “I Am” passages proved useful in illustrating how Mormonism was a restoration of the ancient Church. The “I Am” passages also linked the Jesus of the New Testament and Christianity with the latter-day Jesus, while the Johannine prologue’s emphasis upon light and darkness proved to be the perfect depiction of apostasy and the Restoration. Later revelations introduced deeper theological concepts but maintained the same Johannine language. Images from John such as “another Comforter,” “light,” and “life eternal” became useful building blocks for Restoration theology. Significantly, the revelations did not just borrow or copy John’s language but often reimaged it, molding and crafting the words and ideas of John into a whole new theology, one that maintained John’s high Christology and anthropology but allowed room for God to expand on biblical concepts while

introducing new and innovative doctrinal developments. At one point, Joseph Smith said, “To know God learn to become God’s [*sic*].”²⁵ The Fourth Gospel, a text that presented Jesus Christ as a deity who came to earth and offered the words of eternal life, served perfectly as a text from which to “vocalize” Jesus, to allow latter-day followers of Jesus the opportunity to know God by having him speak in a familiar fashion. Through incorporating the words of John’s Gospel, with their emphasis upon becoming “sons of God,” into revelations given through the Prophet Joseph Smith, God laid out a path by which his children could “learn to become Gods” themselves.

While observing that Mormons typically view the Bible through “the lens of modern revelation,” Robert L. Millet noted that Latter-day Saints “need to be just as attentive to those occasions when Bible passages serve as a hermeneutical lens through which we can expand our understanding of teachings contained in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.”²⁶ This is a daunting task. It is difficult enough to master Restoration scripture, such as the Book of Mormon, but to master both Restoration scripture and the Bible to the point where we can use them to interpret and interrogate each other requires a great deal of work, study, and dedication. But if we truly desire to uncover and understand all the wondrous depths of truth that God has spread throughout the scriptures, it behooves us to do so. The text of the Doctrine and Covenants provides us with one excellent example of how this search can be exercised. We can isolate the biblical texts that contribute to the construction of the Doctrine and Covenants as well as examine both the original context of biblical passages and how phrases and passages have been minutely (or explicitly) altered by God in the Doctrine and Covenants. By doing so, we are able to gain important insights and observe key nuances that might have been easily missed otherwise. The use of the Bible in the Doctrine and Covenants also emphasizes that God views the Bible not as an artifact of the past but as a tool for the future. The reality of continuing revelation is that God can take scripture given two millennia ago and adapt, utilize, and rework it into something that is relevant for the present and future success of the Church. The prominence of the Bible within the Doctrine and Covenants provides to us as readers the chance to participate in an intertextual dialogue, one that promises to reward those readers who take the time and make the effort to engage it, who attempt to locate the truths contained therein.

Notes

1. Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 62. Barlow's statement relies heavily upon work done by Ellis T. Rasmussen, "Textual Parallels to the Doctrine and Covenants and Book of Commandments as Found in the Bible" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1951); and Lois Jean Smutz "Textual Parallels to the Doctrine and Covenants (Sections 65 to 133) as Found in the Bible" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1971). Rasmussen concluded that the median for appearances of the Bible within the Doctrine and Covenants was 1.3 (5), while Smutz's later study confirmed Rasmussen's with a median of 1.33 (62). See also Eric D. Huntsman, "The King James Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants," in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2011), 187.

2. In addition to the language of the revelations being heavily influenced by Johannine language, Joseph Smith also interacted with the Johannine corpus in other ways. Upon inquiring as to the fate of John the Beloved, Joseph Smith saw in a vision "a translated version of the record made on parchment by John and hidden up by himself." *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 1:35–36. Section 76, Joseph Smith's vision of the different levels of heaven and hell, was inspired by a reading of John 5:29. Section 77 contains a dialogue between Smith and an unknown interlocutor regarding some of the more curious images from the book of Revelation, such as the meaning of the "sea of glass" or the identity of the "four beasts." Finally, Smith's most famous sermon, the King Follett Discourse, delivered three months prior to his death, was inspired by a reading of John 5:19.

3. "Christology" is the study of the divinity of Jesus Christ, usually looking specifically at how his divinity interacts with his humanity, as well as his origins. "Anthropology" is the study of how humanity is presented in a text. Did humans preexist? Do they have agency? What kind of afterlife might they obtain?

4. This stands in contrast to the synoptic Gospels, which begin their narratives with the birth (Matthew and Luke) or baptism (Mark) of Jesus.

5. F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1994), 28.

6. Additional usages of this title in the LXX include Exodus 6:6; 20:1, 5; Leviticus 17:5; Hosea 13:4; Joel 2:27, as well as several instances in Isaiah.

7. One scholar writes that the parallels between Isaiah 43 and the Johannine *egō eimi* "are so close that they can hardly be considered accidental." Philip B. Harner, *The "I Am" of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 61.

8. Thomas L. Brodie notes, "Jesus' self-identification as the expected Messiah is so formulated that it indicates the presence of God." *The Gospel According to John: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 224. Raymond Brown examines the use of *egō eimi* at the arrest in John 18 and notes that "throughout the Gospel John has played on the *egō eimi* without an expressed predicate giving voice to Jesus' divine claims. . . . The name seems to have the power to keep the

disciples safe” as well as having “the power to paralyze his enemies.” *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 1:260–261.

9. Significantly, the idea that Jesus speaks with a Johannine “voice” is not unique to the Doctrine and Covenants. Krister Stendahl has observed that the Jesus of 3 Nephi compared most closely to the Johannine Jesus of the New Testament, even though on the surface the temple sermon in 3 Nephi correlates most closely with the Matthean Sermon on the Mount. Krister Stendahl, “The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi,” in *Reflections on Mormonism*, ed. Truman G. Madsen (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1978), 139–54.

10. Significantly, the “I Am” sayings in the revelations that don’t come directly from the Fourth Gospel are found in other texts of the Johannine corpus. Jesus’ claims in D&C 29:5; 32:3; and 110:4 that he is our “advocate” with the Father are clearly an allusion to 1 John 2:1, while the titles of “Alpha and Omega,” “the beginning and the end,” and “the first and the last” come from a third contribution of John, the book of Revelation (D&C 1:11; 22:13).

11. Steven C. Harper makes a similar observation regarding the use of “I Am” in section 110 of the Doctrine and Covenants. See *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour Through Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 407.

12. “Sons” is a translation of the Greek τέκνα, which is better rendered as “children.”

13. The tenses of the verbs in both the prologue of John and the revelation of Joseph Smith are quite interesting. In John 1:12, the author uses the aorist ἔδωκεν, suggesting that this “power” has already been given and is not merely a future possibility. D&C 34:3 and 45:8 both follow in English the sense of the aorist tense, but D&C 11:30 reads: “But verily, verily, I say unto you, that as many as receive me, to them *will I give* power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on my name. Amen” (emphasis added), suggesting that the bestowal of this “power” is a future event.

14. Bruce, *Gospel of John*, 38.

15. The first clause of this verse is an allusion to John 3:16.

16. Compare Mosiah 5:7.

17. *The Gospel According to John I–XII*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, vol. 29 of the Anchor Bible Series (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 11.

18. Augustine, *On the Psalms*, 50.2.

19. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 195.

20. Although section 76 does not employ strict Johannine language per se, “The Vision,” as previously noted, was apparently inspired by Joseph’s translation of John 5:29. See *History of the Church*, 1:245.

21. *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Lyndon W. Cook and Andrew F. Ehat (Orem, UT: Grandin Book, 1991), 15.

22. Although space did not allow an appropriate analysis, another verse where John interacts with the revelation and deals with the question of exaltation is D&C 98:18: “Let not your hearts be troubled; for in my Father’s house are many mansions, and I have prepared a place for you; and where my Father and I am, there ye shall be also.” Compare John 14:2.

23. Smith later declared, “Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection.” *History of the Church*, 5:391.

24. Joseph Fielding Smith stated, “Those who are married in the temple for all time and eternity obtain the blessing of *eternal lives*. I put stress on *eternal lives*. Eternal life is God’s life, that is, to be like him. *Eternal lives* means eternal increase—the continuation, as the revelation says, of the seeds forever. To be married outside of the temple is for time only.” *Answers to Gospel Questions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963), 4:197.

25. *Words of Joseph Smith*, 361.

26. Robert L. Millet, “What the Bible Means to Latter-day Saints,” in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2011), 5.