

Reviews



A New Biography of Enoch (and an excellent tool for the Book of Moses)

By [Terry L. Hutchinson](#) · December 26, 2021

David R. Hocking, Editor, *The Book of Enoch: Annotated Edition*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Digital Legend, 2021)

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *Enoch and the Gathering of Zion: The Witness of ancient Texts for Modern*

***Scripture*, (Orem, UT: Interpreter Foundation & Eborn Books, 2021)**

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *The First Days and the Last Days: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Moses and JS-Matthew In Light of the Temple*, (Orem, UT: Interpreter Foundation & Eborn Books, 2021)

One happy P-day in early 1980, I was cleaning a closet in my apartment in the Canada Toronto Mission. There was a stack of *Ensign* magazines. I discovered in the stack several parts of a continuing series called “A Strange Thing in the Land: The Return of the Book of Enoch” by Hugh Nibley. As it turned out, Brother Nibley began the series in October of 1975 and ended in in August of 1977. We didn’t have the whole thing, but we had most of them. I was excited! Enoch was a figure who had captivated me ever since I read the Pearl of Great Price as a deacon. The entire series was eventually collected and published along with two other articles on Enoch by Brother Nibley.¹

In the intervening four plus decades since Brother Nibley introduced the Church to The



Book of First Enoch and its relation to LDS scripture and practice, the world has seen an explosion of scholarly attention on Enoch. A main evidence of this is the international Enoch Seminar. “In winter 2000, a group of specialists in Enoch literature began corresponding via e-mail and decided to meet the following year in Florence, Italy (many of them for the very first time, face) . . . to discuss in a seminar format the results of their research. . . . By the summer 2000, the Enoch Seminar was officially born.”² Since that time, the Enoch Seminar has swelled in size and endowment to be able to offer several different seminars throughout the world, collect the results of the Seminars into several volumes, and inspire additional scholarship finding important links throughout ancient Jewish and early Christian documents, including the Gospels.³ This year, Professor Jared W. Ludlow, of Brigham Young University, gave a paper at the 11th Enoch Seminar. Also, there are now several scholarly commentaries and translations of the books of Enoch, including prestigious volumes in the *Hermeneia* series.⁴

This year, during the latter part of January, we will be studying Enoch as part of the Come Follow Me program. LDS publishers, along with other people producing various podcasts and other materials, have many resources to aid one’s understanding and study. In fact, there are so many options, it would be impossible to name them all. With regard to the Pearl of Great Price, there are a few new ones, but this article will focus primarily on a few dealing with the patriarch, Enoch.

The first offering is a tempting package, beautifully bound, with gilt pages and a gold ribbon bookmark. It’s the *Annotated Edition of The Book of Enoch* edited by David R. Hocking and published by Digital Legends Company. Let’s begin with the positives about the book. It’s a very attractive package that matches the other “Annotated Editions” Hocking has edited. The text contains some basic information about all three Enoch books, using the

1912 R.H. Charles translations. The text is printed in various colors, to help the Editor make his points. It has beautiful full color illustrations and it will provide a reader with an initial understanding of the differences between the three books.

On the other hand, the 1912 Charles translation of the three Enoch books is rarely used by modern students and scholars. All three books of Enoch have more modern and scholarly translations with additional material and brief commentary widely available.⁵ Most of these take into consideration modern discoveries from the Dead Sea Scrolls and elsewhere. Another challenge is that it appears most of Hacking's citations are to Wikipedia. This isn't in itself damaging, but the obvious lack of familiarity with world-wide Enoch studies and developments when compared with other recent Enoch publications prepared for the modern Latter Day Saint audience, certainly doesn't carry the same weight and shows a lack of engagement with what is now widely known. The *Annotated Edition of The Book of Enoch* will make a visually impressive gift, but those seeking more serious approaches to any of the three books of Enoch in the volume will look elsewhere.

One place to begin is either (and preferably both) of the two new volumes just released by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, a frequent contributor to these pages. The first is called *Enoch and the Gathering to Zion (Gathering)*, and the second is called *The First Days and the Last Days: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Moses and JS-Matthew In Light of the Temple (First Days)*. Both are co-published by the Interpreter Foundation⁶ and Eborn Books. *Gathering* is also published in collaboration with Book of Mormon Central. Both are available now on Amazon digitally and in softcover and should be available on FAIR Bookstore and Eborn Books websites soon. I've said in the pages of this magazine more than once how I admire Jeff's work,⁷ but he has outdone himself here, especially with regard to Enoch. In 2010 and 2014, Jeff published two volumes on the Book of Moses and

the first 11 chapters of Genesis.⁸ Together, the two volumes total over 1700 pages. In those two volumes, Jeff discussed Enoch and his place in the Book of Moses. Now, with *Gathering* and *First Days*, Jeff has distilled much of what he said in those volumes and added his new research and observations. The research for both volumes includes almost 450 bibliographical entries (I don't recall any from Wikipedia). While the sheer number of books and articles that went into the book isn't necessarily a sign of its quality, I can verify that Jeff has included much of the recent scholarship from the top scholars around the world, not just the writing of LDS scholars such as himself.

In *Gathering*, Jeff points out that in Chapters 6 and 7 of the Book of Moses we are given “the closest thing to a full biography we have in the Book of Moses.” (p. i) Enoch, for some reason, is mentioned only three times in either the Old or the New Testament. (See Gen 5:21-24 ; 1 Chr. 1:3; and Jude 14-15); yet, as Nibley notes, “It is strange that the man to whom the Bible gives only a few brief sentences should be the colossus who bestrides the Apocrypha as no other.”⁹ Even though the Bible mentions Enoch so infrequently, several distinct copies of the book of *1 Enoch* were among the discoveries at Qumran, showing that the book was used by that community.¹⁰

After his 1976-77 series in the Ensign, Hugh Nibley never again worked on original Enoch research. The highlight of that series of articles came at the very end, when Nibley received the English translation of fragments of the Book of Enoch discovered in Cave 4 of the Dead Sea Scrolls.¹¹ *Gathering* tells what happened next and builds directly on Nibley's discovery. Especially helpful for the reader (as with all of Jeff's work), photographs and art are included which illustrate his points. Among these are photographs of the actual pages Nibley saw with his penciled circle of the name “Mahawai” (p. 16). Jeff goes on to describe the reaction of non-LDS scholars to Nibley's finding in the Qumran document and the Book

of Moses. There's a lot more to say and Jeff tells the story of the Book of Enoch from the first rumors of its existence, to its translation into English in 1821 and fills in the rest. Normally, this kind of background information would weigh down a book like this, but in Jeff's capable hands, this story became a page-turner.

Gathering builds on Nibley's discoveries and Jeff's previous work on Enoch by pointing out new Enoch discoveries in the last ten years that expand our knowledge of the ancient prophet and shows how much of the Enoch material in the Book of Moses is supported by other ancient documents and art. An important feature of this book is Jeff's analysis of the Manichaean Cosmology Painting, which, "contains scenes from the story of Enoch in Mani's version of the Book of Giants (BG)." (p. iv) Analysis of this art has only recently come to light.¹² Other new discoveries described by *Gathering* include parallels between the Book of Giants (fragments of a portion of the Book of Enoch found in the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1948) (pp.9-10); and Mandaean writings, whose "teachings and practices pertaining to religious ordinances, including rituals related to baptism and heavenly ascent," (p. 10) will be of interest to Latter Day Saints. *Gathering* does an excellent job of bringing all the material together and explaining it in a way that shows the ancient nature of the Enoch story in the Book of Moses. It also provides additional basis for one's own conclusion that Joseph Smith could not have come up with this on his own.

In addition to these demonstrations, *Gathering* provides a larger framework for Enoch and his mission and it does so in a way that helps the reader understand the concept of Zion and its covenants in a way that emphasizes the temple. This "biography" of Enoch becomes a roadmap to inspire the reader and show them how Enoch is really a "forerunner", an example of how we can become more like God and a Zion people through pondering his experiences. At the end, Jeff says all of the supplemental material is there for people to come to their own conclusions about Joseph Smith and his report of Enoch (as well as the

rest of the Book of Moses). Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, however, leaves no doubt where he stands on those issues.

First Days is a companion volume to *Gathering*. It provides a slimmed-down version of the new Enoch research and conclusions found in *Gathering*, and it provides the new research and other analysis that Jeff Bradshaw has been engaging in on the Book of Moses for the last decade. In addition to the new discoveries brought up in *Gathering*, Jeff was a participant in two conferences at BYU on the Book of Moses¹³, he's written several essays on the Pearl of Great Price Central website about Moses as well as many other projects over the last decade. The Book of Moses Bibliographies found at the Interpreter Foundation website are excellent supplements to the information in Jeff's books.¹⁴ This information, along with what he has already produced in his massive volumes on Moses, are distilled into *First Days*. The format for *First Days* is completely different than *Gathering*, which is more of a traditional narrative that's broken down into paragraphs following verse citations. *First Days* provides the text at the top of a page and then has extensive explanatory notes about the text below. The amount of text on each commentary page ranges from just a few lines (with the remainder taken up by the notes) to about a third at the most.

First Days focuses on five questions which help focus the Book of Moses "in light of the temple." The first three questions are answered in the (relatively brief) Introduction, but are identified on the first page.

1. Why did God command Joseph Smith to translate the Bible?
2. What could Joseph Smith have learned from translating Genesis?
3. Why is the Book of Moses important today?

Once those questions are addressed, the rest of the book deals with two additional questions:

4. How does the Book of Moses fit the temple narrative pattern?
5. How does the Book of Moses fit with Genesis and ancient texts?

Sometimes, rather than provide a potentially definitive answer, the notes lead to a question to ponder. An example of this is found in Moses 7:45. The explanatory note reads, “does this refer to the same group that was earlier called ‘all the nations of the earth’? (p. 179)

In addition to brief summaries of mountains of Moses material, Jeff has managed to engage with scholars whose points of view differ from his. He does so in a non-confrontational spirit and in a way that acknowledges the differences of opinion and the supporting thoughts of Jeff on the topics. He shows the way for meaningful dialogue without being offensive. An example is his comments about “Was Eve Beguiled?”, a text box found on page 74. Jeff presents the thoughts of scholars including Julie M. Smith, (a scholar whose work I’ve appreciated and respected for many years). Jeff shows where they differ on the point and he presents citations to both Julie’s and his work for the reader to determine for themselves. There are other examples as well.

A regular feature of Jeff’s work is the addition of diagrams which help illustrate his points. In *First Days*, there is a page of text with the descriptive notes below and on the back page there is a diagram, chart, or illustration which helps make his point clearer. Whether it’s a diagram and explanation of a pattern of Heavenly Ascent found in Moses 1 (p.12) or an explanation of the symbols in Michaelangelo’s Creation of Adam (p. 36), these boxed features are a terrific addition to the book. There are 70 of them and each fills a page of text as well. This is where, in the case of both *Gathering* and *First Days*, the color versions are vital. There are black and white versions available for less, but viewing the Manichaean Cosmology painting and its details (for just one example), it is very difficult to understand it without the color. All digital versions of both books have the color, but the color soft-cover paperback is only available from Amazon (although its \$10.00 more). A copy of the

painting, taken from an image online (not the detailed scholarly version used in the book) is below:

The Pearl of Great Price also contains Joseph Smith's inspired rendition of Matthew 24 from the New Testament. In my 1983 Pearl of Great Price class from Hugh Nibley, he spent the first six weeks of the class on that single chapter and it was an eye-opening scholarly experience! *First Days* provides a commentary on Joseph Smith–Matthew, which follows similar themes to that of its coverage of Moses. The last fifth of the *First Days* is dedicated to this. In the brief Introduction to this section, *First Days* emphasizes President Nelson's admonition to prepare for the last days and recommends the study of "what Jesus Christ himself said about the events preceding His coming." (p. 215) The Introduction further

identifies the major differences between the original Matthew chapter 24 and Joseph Smith's version given by inspiration. It recommends a combined study of Matthew 24, the JS Matthew and D & C 45 (along with some other D & C references).

The remainder of the chapter, like the earlier part of the book covering Moses, emphasizes the temple and the covenants contained therein.

Gathering uses a more traditional reference system and footnotes, along with having more than twice as many bibliographical sources. Nearly a third of the book is taken up by its bibliography and its footnotes. I especially appreciate footnotes that not only provide the references, but also provides points and information that might depart from the main thought of the chapter or section, but which are detailed commentaries in and of themselves. *First Days*, however, uses a different system that took me some time to get used to. It's a system used in some professional journals that the initials of the author's name, beginning with the first name (which means the abbreviation doesn't always track with the bibliographic reference. Thankfully, there are only 130 of them, and once you get used to it, it does identify the reference easier than a full footnote.

In another effort to streamline *First Days* (which only has about ten percent of the book given over to its references), Jeff often quotes from his longer works, even when he is quoting from other authors. The drawback of this is when the reader wants to track down the original reference, they have to go to the older work. As seen in the endnotes, both of these are available on line however. There's also some recent precedent for this. The three volume International Critical Commentary (ICC) volumes on Matthew by W.D. Davies and Dale Allison, Jr., were later abridged into a shorter volume¹⁵. There's a more recent example from G.K. Beale's excellent volume on Revelations published as part of the New International Commentary on the New Testament series. The technical references were

removed and the abridged version (more accessible to general readers) was abridged by Beale and David Campbell¹⁶. Both shorter volumes occasionally send the reader to the older work, as does *First Days*.

I found *Enoch and the Gathering to Zion* and *The First Days and the Last Days: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary on the Book of Moses and JS-Matthew In Light of the Temple* to be terrific companions which work hand-in-hand to aid my Come Follow Me studies for the Book of Moses and especially the life of Enoch. They provide a compelling and understandable view of the Book of Moses and its stories. They'll make great Christmas presents, whether they're given digitally or in print. More importantly, as Jeff points out at the end of the Appendices in *Gatherings*, "Hugh Nibley wrote that discoveries in ancient digs and ancient texts, tangible artifacts that sometimes provide striking witnesses of the fact that truths restored in our day were also known in former times, are a 'reminder to the Saints that they are still expected to do their homework and may claim no special revelation or convenient handout as long as they ignore the vast treasure-house of materials that God has placed within their reach.'" (p. 173) To that, I say, "Amen, brother." May we all get to work and use *Gathering* and *First Days* as some of our tools.

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[1. Nibley, Hugh W.](#), *Enoch the Prophet*, (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, Vol. 2), (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book & FARMS, 1986).

[2. Gabriele Boccaccini, “Introduction: The Contemporary Renaissance of Enoch Studies, and the Enoch Seminar”](#), pp. vii-x, [Boccaccini, Gabriele and Collins, John J., Eds., *The Early Enoch Literature*](#), (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2007), at p. vii.

[3. Reynolds, Benjamin E., and Boccaccini, Gabriele, *Reading the Gospel of John’s Christology as Jewish Messianism: Royal, Prophetic and Divine Messiahs*](#), (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2018), which is a collection of the Sixth Nangeroni Meeting of the Seminar in the summer of 2016. There are other reports from similar Meetings that are in preparation.

[4. Nickelsburg, George W.E., *1 Enoch 1 \(Hermeneia\)*](#), (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001) and Nickelsburg, George W.E. and VanderKam, James C., [1 Enoch 2 \(Hermeneia\)](#), (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012). The *2 Enoch* Hermeneia volume is forthcoming from Andrei Orlov.

[5. All three are found in the first 315 pages of Charlesworth, James H., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, Vol. 1*](#), (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1983) which are reasonably available. Most scholars and students today rely on these. Another economical version is the Hermeneia translation of 1 Enoch, Nickelsburg, George W. E. & VanderKam, James C., [1 Enoch: A New Translation](#), (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2004).

[6. DISCLOSURE: I volunteer as a radio host for monthly broadcasts for Interpreter Foundation.](#)

[7. https://latterdaysaintmag.com/article-1-14240/](https://latterdaysaintmag.com/article-1-14240/) Posted April 21, 2014.

[8. Bradshaw, Jeffrey M. *Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve. 2014 Updated ed. In God’s Image and Likeness 1*](#). Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Books, 2014.

<https://archive.org/download/140123IGIL12014ReadingS>.

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9. [Nibley, Hugh W.](#), *Enoch the Prophet, (Collected Works of Hugh Nibley, Vol. 2)*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book & FARMS, 1986), at p.

10. [George W. Nickelsburg](#), “[Enoch, Books of](#)”, pp. 249-252, Schiffman, Lawrence H. & VanderKam, James C., Eds. *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), at p. 251.

11. [Milik, J.T. & Black, Matthew](#), *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*, (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1976).

12. [Gulácsi, Zsuzanna](#), *Mani's Pictures: The Didactic Images of the Manichaeans from Sasanian Mesopotamia to Uyger Central Asia and Tang-Ming China*, (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2015).

13. [The proceedings were a collaboration between Interpreter Foundation, Book of Mormon Central and FAIR. They've recently been published in a two volume work containing almost 1500 pages: Bradshaw, Jeffrey M.; Seely, David Rolph; Welch, John W.; and Gordon, Scott A., Eds., Tracing Ancient Threads in the Book of Moses: Inspired Origins, Temple Contexts, and Literary Qualities](#), (Provo, UT: Interpreter Foundation & Eborn, 2021).

14. <https://interpreterfoundation.org/bibliographies/moses/>

15. [Allison, Dale C., Jr., Ed.](#), *Matthew: A Shorter Commentary*, (London, England: T & T

Clark, 2005).

[16. Beale, G.K., Campbell, David, Revelation: A Shorter Commentary](#), (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

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