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***In God's Image and Likeness 2
Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel***

Preface and Introduction

Authors: Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and David J. Larsen

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<https://ebornbooks.com/shop/non-fiction/mormon-lds/mormon-new/in-gods-image-likeness-2-enoch-noah-tower-of-babel/>

Recommended Citation

Bradshaw, Jeffrey M., and David J. Larsen. *In God's Image and Likeness 2, Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel*. Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2014.
<https://interpreterfoundation.org/reprints/in-gods-image-and-likeness-2/IGIL2Intro.pdf>.

IN GOD'S IMAGE AND LIKENESS 2

ENOCK, NOAH, AND THE TOWER OF BABEL



JEFFREY M. BRADSHAW
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TempleThemes.net

The Interpreter Foundation

Eborn Books

2014

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2018 17 16 15 14

5 4 3 2 1

Published by:
The Interpreter Foundation
MormonInterpreter.com

and

Eborn Books
254 S. Main Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
EbornBooks.com

Cover: Stephen T. Whitlock, 1951-: *Noah Sees the Ark in Vision*

Printed and bound in China through Bolton Associates, Inc., San Rafael, CA 94901

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013918331

Bradshaw, Jeffrey M.

In God's Image and Likeness 2: Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of
Babel / Jeffrey M. Bradshaw.—1st ed.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-890718-62-6 (Hardbound), 978-1-890718-64-0 (Softbound)

ISBN-13: 978-1-890718-65-7 (PDF edition)

*Dedicated to Virgil Jon and Jacquelyn Abraham Parker —
the missionaries of the Belgium-Brussels Mission, 1975-1977 —
and the people of France and Belgium we missionaries love with all our hearts
— Jeff*

*To my dear wife, Marluce, for inspiring me through her example to live the principles
taught in the Word of God; with Mishelly, Jaden, John, and Christine — you are the
joy and love of my life; and to my goodly parents, David and Maureen Larsen, for
fostering a life-long love for the stories of the Scriptures
— David*

IN GOD’S IMAGE AND LIKENESS 2

ENOCH, NOAH, AND THE TOWER OF BABEL

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Acknowledgments

We acknowledge the support offered by Daniel C. Peterson and other members of the executive and editorial boards at *The Interpreter Foundation* for the typesetting and printing of this book. We are also grateful to Bret and Cindy Eborn for enabling this book to come to press on a very challenging schedule. Joanne Bolton of Bolton Associates handled the demanding printing requirements with superb professionalism. Timothy Guymon worked expertly and tirelessly on technical editing and typesetting tasks. Tanya Spackman kindly recruited and organized the competent help of Tyson Briggs, Ryan and Alleen Buhl, Tanner Matthews, and David W. Smith to complete the final portions of the scripture index.

Colby Townsend authored the section of the annotated bibliography dealing with *1 Enoch*. Benjamin L. McGuire and Craig Foster patiently read through portions of the manuscript and offered many helpful suggestions. Brant A. Gardner lent his expertise on some important matters. Anna Winkler also provided comments. Ronan James Head, a friend and collaborator, was a valued source of expertise on Akkadian diacritics and other ancient Near East matters. Wim van Binsbergen and Samuel Zinner were most generous in making materials available for study and use. Stephen T. Whitlock generously shared his views, materials, and the beautiful photograph of Noah that graces the cover. (The photo was taken during a pleasant evening we spent together at the theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.) The continued encouragement and prayers of Chris and Angie Miasnik have meant much. As the “mighty hunter,” Augustus Jaeger, was to Edward Elgar, Chris has been to Jeff. Like so many LDS students of scripture, we are deeply indebted to the pioneering work of Hugh Nibley in Pearl of Great Price and temple studies. We are also grateful for the scholarship of Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews for their efforts to make the original manuscripts of the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible available for study. The groundbreaking Pearl of Great Price commentary by Richard D. Draper, S. Kent Brown, and Michael D. Rhodes was an invaluable aid to our study.

L. Michael Morales deserves special thanks for his friendship, his example of Christian living, and his generosity in allowing us to use text and figures from his valuable study *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured: Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus*. Elizabeth Harper also shared material from her extensive studies of the story of Noah. Jeff also owes thanks to Edward J. Brandt, who introduced him to the spare eloquence of biblical Hebrew during a beginners course at the University of Utah Institute of Religion many years ago.

We appreciate the kindness of the following individuals, who provided helpful comments, conversations, encouragement, and tangible support at various points along the way: Eduardo and Bessie Aguilar, Gary N. Anderson, Omar and Dominique Aomar, Jonathan J. and Hind Aomar, Dan Bachman, Margaret Barker, Philip L. Barlow, David Bokovoy, Chris and Chandra Borcik, Paul and Sylke Boshard, Don Bradley, S. Kent Brown, Matthew B. and Jaimie Brown, David M. Calabro, Delton W. and Cherrie Clark, Alison V. P. Coutts, Kevin and Shauna Curtis, Jimmy and Krista Donohoe, Andrew F. Ehat, James E. Faulconer, Paul and Joan Feltovich, Charles and Drucilla Gagliano, Alonzo Gaskill, Terryl L. and Fiona Givens, Randy and Autumn Goff, Michael A. Goodrich, Scott Gordon, Matthew Grey, William J. Hamblin, Bryce M. Haymond, Ronan James Head, Rich and Laura Hoffman, Stephane and Agnès Janda, Bruno and Magali Kahne, Marcel Kahne, Greg and Tresa Kirby, Jared W. Ludlow, John M. Lundquist, Hervé and Alice Marand, Carl and Catherine McArthur, Louis C. Midgley, George L. Mitton, Joseph and Stephanie Mullikin, Daniel Oswald, Donald W. Parry, Ugo A. Perego, Daniel C. and Debbie Peterson, Eric and Susanne Peterson, George Potter, Jacob Rennaker, Stephen D. Ricks, Glenn H. and Deb Robinson,

David R. Seely, Gregory L. Smith, Rudi and Sylvie Sordes, Tanya Spackman, John and Angie Taylor, John S. Thompson, John A. Tvedtnes, Ted Vaggalis, John W. Welch, Robert and Kendra Wheeler, Mark Alan Wright, and Ben and Kelly Young.

Among the many favorite images appearing in this book, we are honored to have received permission to include works from contemporary LDS artists and photographers who deserve thanks by name: Val W. Brinkerhoff, James C. Christensen, Holly Parker Holst, Brian Kershisnik, Linda McCarthy, and Stephen T. Whitlock. René Jacobs was most cordial in offering permission for the use of his artwork. Sincere thanks also for the kindness of Don Lademann, and for all that he has done to preserve the Larrinaga Collection and to make the *Babylon* painting available for this book. Special gratitude is also due to Julee Holcombe for permission to use *Babel Revisited*. Katherine Scarfe Beckett went the extra mile to assure the best reproduction possible of her lovely drawings of language family trees.

Hailey Walker and other staff at the Church Intellectual Property Office deserve a special thanks for their careful review of the manuscript and their willingness to allow us to include Church-copyrighted material. Michelle Spiron was patient and persistent in helping us obtain the permission to use quotations that originally appeared in Deseret Book publications. We are especially grateful for the use of quotations from Elder Neal A. Maxwell, whose love for the story of Enoch has been contagious. Jennifer Hurlbut and Marny Parkin helped us obtain permission for the use of a photograph from *BYU Studies* from Walter Whipple's collection of Polish folk art. Acknowledgments for the help and generosity of the many other organizations, library staff, and artists who provided permission and access to the high-quality images used in this book are given in the *Figure Credits* section below.

Jeff is grateful for the collaboration of David Larsen on this project, whose friendship and example not only improved the final result but also made the process of writing it more enjoyable. Jeff also enjoyed the warm support of brothers and sisters and their spouses: Judi and John Morrell, Bonnie Robinson, Jonathan D. and An Redd Bradshaw, Scott B. and Linn Pinnock Bradshaw. The book cover was adapted from a design by Jeff's brother Jon. Jeff's son, Samuel H. Bradshaw, designed and created the informative *Table of Nations* figure in the chapter on Genesis 10, developed the dust jacket, and produced the beautiful thumbnail index of images. Samuel was also responsible for many aspects of the overall book design as well as the definition of styles and templates. Jeff's other children and their spouses (Robert W. and Camille James Bradshaw, M. Elizabeth and Sakiusa Vakalala, Jr., Thomas M. and Lisa Paulson Bradshaw) offered their support and encouragement, and contributed helpful perspectives and feedback. With the collaboration of Robert and Samuel, Thomas created and maintains the *Temple Themes* Web site. Michael and Katie Slay Forster provided welcome warmth, humor, and companionship. Jeff's wife, Kathleen, lovingly accommodated the many inconveniences of the writing process and was, as always, honest and insightful in her comments and unfailing in her support.

David would like to thank the following for their support: my kind and loving wife, Marluce, and my dear children: Mishelly, Jaden, John, and Christine; my goodly parents, David and Maureen Larsen; and my sister, Heidi Larsen Nybo, her husband, Larry, and their sweet children. I want to express my gratitude to my university professors, and especially to my postgraduate advisors, Andrei Orlov and James Davila, who opened my eyes and understanding to the magnificent corpus of ancient literature on Enoch and other pseudepigraphic and apocalyptic writings. I am grateful to my undergraduate professors at Brigham Young University for giving me a solid foundation in both the teachings of the restored gospel and also ancient languages and traditions. I thank my many mentors today, such as John Welch and so many individuals from the School of Religious Education at BYU, for providing incredible examples of academic excellence combined with humble and sincere dedication to building Zion.

Credits

Cover and Frontispiece: *Noah Sees the Ark in Vision*. Stephen T. Whitlock, 1951-; Photograph IMG1821, 24 April 2009, © Stephen T. Whitlock. Detail of Patriarchs Window, Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon, England. See also FIGURE M8-9 below.

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o-1. *Book of Enoch P, Chester Beatty XII, leaf 3 (Verso)*, 4th century http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:P_Chester_Beatty_XII_leaf_3_verso.jpg (accessed September 18, 2013); **o-2.** *Donald Duck Gathers the Animals to the Ark*, 1999. From *Fantasia 2000*, © The Walt Disney Company; http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Donald_Duck (accessed September 24, 2013); **o-3.** *In Search of Noah's Ark*, 1976. © Clear Channel Communications, Inc. for Shick Sunn Classic Pictures; **o-4.** *Enki Inserts a Computer Disk*. <http://enkispeaks.com/2012/08/28/galzu-saved-earthlings-from-flood-book-of-enki-tablet-6-sitchin-youtubes-lessin-article/> (accessed September 21, 2013); **o-5.** *Russell Crowe as Noah*. <http://beforeitsnews.com/religion/2013/01/russell-crowes-noah-film-a-warning-for-christians-2447702.html> (accessed June 17, 2013); Publicity still from *Noah*, © Paramount Pictures; **o-6.** A “*Watcher on the Attack*”. <http://www.zekefilm.org/2012/07/12/the-beginning-is-the-end-is-the-beginning/> (accessed September 21, 2013). Cover from Darren Aronofsky and Niko Henrichon, *Noah*, vol. 2. © Lombard; **o-7.** *Pouring Liquid*. http://everyonestea.blogspot.com/2012_03_01_archive.html (accessed September 20, 2013); **o-8.** *Typology in Biblical Tradition*. The table is based on the work of A. J. Wensinck, and is adapted with the permission of Nicolas Wyatt. Original in Nicolas Wyatt. “Water, water everywhere...: Musings on the aqueous myths of the Near East.” In *The Mythic Mind: Essays on Cosmology and Religion in Ugaritic and Old Testament Literature*, edited by Nicholas Wyatt, 189-237. London, England: Equinox, 2005, pp. 224-225; **o-9.** *Finding the Shipwrecked Sailor*, 18th-19th century, watercolor, 13.2 x 21.4 cm (sheet), Thomas Rowlandson, British, 1756-1827; © Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, 1963.24.531, with thanks to Sue Grinols.

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FIGURE P-1. *Virgil Jon and Jacquelyn Abraham Parker, Strombeek-Bever, Belgium, 1975.*
*Virgil Parker, The Alcazaba, Malaga, Spain, 2013.*¹ Holly Parker Holst, 1955-.

1 Compare artwork by Wulf Barsch, FIGURE 6-9 in J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, p. 468. Cf. COLOR PLATE 6-9.

PREFACE

AS I neared completion of the first volume of *In God's Image and Likeness* in 2009, I had a chance to discuss the project with my former mission president, Virgil J. Parker. Grateful for the lasting influence President and Sister Parker have had on my life and still being in awe of the great store of practical and spiritual knowledge they have accumulated over decades of learning and service, I was thrilled when Virgil told me that the Moses was his favorite book of scripture. When I asked him what part he liked best, he spoke without hesitation, "The story of Enoch!" After an awkward pause, I told him that Enoch wasn't in the book — that it only went as far as the story of Adam and Eve.

This second volume of commentary was written to rectify this deficiency. David and I have done our best with the story of Enoch, and I hope it will not be a disappointment. Sadly, Sister Parker passed away on August 16, 2013. I had hoped to present this tangible tribute to their service to them together, but now I will have to offer my personal thanks to her in another world.

This book is also dedicated to the missionaries with whom I had the privilege to serve, and to the wonderful and warmhearted people of Belgium and France who are dear to my heart.

With a degree approaching my love for the "friends on earth and friends above"¹ who have blessed my life, I love and revere the Word of God — in both its written and unwritten forms. To say that I love it means that I cannot regard it "objectively"; I experience it with feelings akin to the reverence I accord to wise and beloved counselors and friends. James Kugel aptly describes this kind of relationship:² "The person who seeks to learn from the Bible is smaller than the text; he crouches at its feet, waiting for its instruction or insights." Though I realize that I might use similar words to describe my feelings toward the best sorts of secular literature, there is a difference, and C. S. Lewis describes it well:³

Neither Aeschylus nor even Virgil tacitly prefaces his poetry with the formula "Thus say the gods." But in most parts of the Bible everything is implicitly or explicitly introduced with "Thus saith the Lord." It is, if you like to put it that way, not merely a sacred book but a book so remorselessly and continuously sacred that it does not invite, it excludes or repels, the merely aesthetic approach. You can read it as literature only by a tour de force. You are cutting the wood against the grain, using the tool for a purpose it was not intended to serve. It demands incessantly to be taken on its own terms: it will not continue to give literary delight very long except to those who go to it for something quite different ...

If many critics, especially older critics, speak of it differently today, I suggest that they may be influenced by amiable but unliterary motives. A sacred book rejected is like a king dethroned. Towards either of them there arises in well-disposed minds a chivalrous compunction. One would like to concede everything except the thing really at issue. Having supported the deposition, one would wish to make it clear that one had no personal malice. Just because you cannot countenance a restoration [of royal rule], you are anxious to speak kindly of the old gentleman in his personal capacity — to praise his fund of anecdote or his collection of butterflies. I cannot help thinking that when a critic old enough to remember the Bible in its power prophesies for it a great future as literature, he is often unconsciously swayed by similar

1 *Hymns* (1985), For the Beauty of the Earth, #92.

2 J. L. Kugel, *How to Read*, p. 666.

3 C. S. Lewis, *Literary Impact*, pp. 144-145.



FIGURE P-2. *Scene Near West Lake, Hangzhou, China, 2012*

This scene of ineffable beauty appeared amidst incongruous circumstances. The situation recalled the process of writing this book.

motives. But such courtesies will not preserve it. Neither the Bible nor those who still read it as believers invite them; and the generation which is now growing up will disregard them. For the Bible, whether in the authorized or in any other version, I foresee only two possibilities; either to return as a sacred book or to follow the classics, if not quite into oblivion yet into the ghost-life of the museum and the specialist's study. Except, of course, among the believing minority who read it to be instructed and get literary enjoyment as a by-product.

Of course, I do not believe that the scriptures, as we have them, are complete, perfect, and infallible. Indeed, in one sense I think it is fair to say that the scriptures are no more complete, perfect, or infallible than the people who study them. "Scripture is not in the reading, but in the understanding,"⁴ wrote Hilary. Or, to put it another way, "God speaks to man through His Spirit; and only in the measure in which man abides in the Spirit does he hear and understand this voice."⁵ The scriptures do me little good when I am in the wrong frame of mind. But when I am ready to learn from scripture, insight and guidance flow freely. I cannot say that this inspiration comes directly from the words of scripture, but it does accompany the reading of those words.

4 Hilary of Poitiers, *Ad Constantium Augustum* 2:9, in J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae Latina*, 10:570: *Scripturae enim non in legendo sunt, set in intelligendo*. Inspired writing is the dual of this process. Though God gives His words to man "in their weakness, after the manner of their language" (D&C 1:24), "the Word of God does not grow dim because it sounds and is pronounced in the tongue of man. On the contrary, the human word becomes transfigured ... because God deigned to speak in the human tongue. The Divine Spirit breathes in the organism of human speech, in the substance of human words. And therefore the tongue of man acquires force and firmness. It becomes possible for the word of man to speak of God Because man is called not only to receive Truth attentively, but also to witness of it" (G. Florovsky, *Work*).

5 *Ibid.*

Writing about scripture is similar in that way for me. It is difficult to describe the special delight I've felt in compiling this book. Ultimately, it had little to do with the words that found their way onto its pages, but it did accompany the writing of those words. In an essay on John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, C. S. Lewis tried to describe the process of inspiration that comes to an author in the "golden moments of unimpeded composition."⁶ In the case of *Pilgrim's Progress*, he speculated that "two things in Bunyan's mind which had hitherto lain far apart" were "suddenly reunited" — namely the "scheme of a journey with adventures" and his "lifelong preoccupation with the spiritual life . . . The one fitted the other like a glove. Now, as never before, the whole man was engaged." Continuing, Lewis wrote: "I suspect that great work often comes about in that fashion. It springs from a sort of internal marriage. When elements in the author's mind which have been long estranged are unexpectedly brought together in a fruitful embrace."⁷ Whether or not the embrace that produced this book was fruitful the reader must judge. As for the writing of it, however, there has been deep satisfaction and sweet reassurance through the engagement of the whole man in this very personal labor of love.

Jeffrey M. Bradshaw
Pensacola, Florida
13 September 2013

I thoroughly enjoyed Jeff's first volume of *In God's Image and Likeness*, but also wished that it had covered the final chapters of the book of Moses, especially the story of Enoch. The revelation regarding Enoch and his righteous city and their ascension to heaven captures my imagination and has inspired faith and wonder in me for as long as I can remember. I was excited when I learned that Jeff was planning a second volume of commentary that would include the Enoch and Noah stories and highly enthusiastic and honored when he asked me to help him write it.

During my post-graduate education, I had the opportunity to study the ancient literature associated with the prophet Enoch. In these texts, Enoch is a dynamic character whose experiences and revelations never cease to amaze. However, I feel that some of the most spectacular, beautiful, and faith-inspiring claims regarding the prophet Enoch are to be found in chapters 6 and 7 of the book of Moses in the LDS Pearl of Great Price. From the moving of mountains and the turning of rivers out of their course at his word to the taking up of his entire city into heaven, the Enoch of the book of Moses is a model of the power of righteous living. The ascent of his city of Zion would be an event that the world would remember (albeit often dimly) and aspire to throughout history ever after.

During my years of friendship with Jeff, I have likewise come to see him as a man of many inspirational qualities. The love that he has for the Word of God, his dedication to examining it by study and by faith, his example of living what he believes, and his tireless work ethic have opened my eyes to what it is to be a disciple-scholar. It has been a pleasure indeed to work with and learn from him on this project.

David J. Larsen
Springville, Utah
18 September 2013

⁶ C. S. Lewis, *Vision of John Bunyan*, p. 147.

⁷ C. S. Lewis, *Pilgrim's Progress*.



FIGURE P-3. *Frontispiece, Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion, Copy E, 1804*
Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, Connecticut
William Blake, 1757-1827

"*Jerusalem*, subtitled *The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, was the last, longest, and greatest in scope of the prophetic books ... by the poet, artist, and engraver William Blake. A character can be a person and a place. Jerusalem, the Emanation of Albion, is a woman and a city. Albion, 'the Universal Humanity,' is a man and a land (Britain)."¹

"*Jerusalem* was written, designed, illustrated, etched, printed and hand-colored by Blake (with help from his wife Katherine) between 1804 and 1820. Not surprisingly, given the labor required to produce even a single copy of the book, and the lack of any appeal to the publishing market of the day, only a few copies were completed, of which [five complete copies] still exist"² ...

The frontispiece [at left] is an invitation to the labyrinthine, liberating journey embodied in the book, a journey through inner and outer worlds, the ancient past, the hellish present and an imagined future. The figure is Los, protagonist of *Jerusalem*, who in Blake's mythology represents human imagination and human labor and their capacity to transform an inhuman universe.³ Los is the poet-prophet who seeks to awaken his friend, Albion (England), to his own humanity and the humanity of others, to the 'fibres of love from man to man / Through Albion's pleasant land.'

In this introductory image, Los is portrayed as a London night watchman entering the dark regions — beginning the journey that is the book — through a gothic doorway, partially illuminated by his glowing orblike lantern ... Morton D. Paley comments:

The dark coat, broad brimmed hat and lantern identify Los as a London night watchman; but the sandal links him with antiquity ... As is always the case with Blake's major figures, there are multiple references here. The sandal and lantern recall 'our friend Diogenes the Grecian,' as Blake's Isaiah call him in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. In the Bible, both Isaiah and Ezekiel are addressed by God as watchmen. Later in *Jerusalem*, Los is a watchman who puts on golden sandals (Jerusalem 83:75-6) and in *Jerusalem* 85-86 he sings his Watch Song. These roles as Prophetic watchman and seeker are conflated further with those of Elijah and of the Savior ... Los is engaged in an act of self-sacrifice in descending into the interior of Albion, as is made clear in some of the lines originally incised in this plate and later expunged

Part Two of *Jerusalem* ... includes one of Blake's major lyrics ... :

The fields from Islington to Marybone,
To Primrose Hill and Saint Johns Wood:
Were builded over with pillars of gold,
And there Jerusalem's pillars stood.

This happy state of affairs does not endure. Albion and Jerusalem are, as it were, divorced.

Albion slept beneath the Fatal Tree
And the Druid's golden Knife,
Rioted in human gore
In Offerings of Human Life ...

Albion's sleep unleashes his 'spectre' — the calculating power that seeks to make human beings instruments of a self-aggrandizing will: 'He wither'd up sweet Zion's Hill / From every Nation of the Earth ... He wither'd up the Human Form, / By laws of sacrifice for sin...' The upshot is a ruthless quest for domination and ceaseless world war:

The Rhine was red with human blood:
The Danube roll'd a purple tide;
On the Euphrates Satan stood:
And over Asia stretch'd his pride.

An indignant Blake roars at Albion and his 'spectre':

Is this thy soft Family-Love
Thy cruel Patriarchal pride
Destroying all the World beside.
Planting thy Family alone?

The relevance of these lines to today's global order will be obvious to readers ... The lyric concludes, however, with a counter-vision, which I hope would have a similar relevance. Albion and Jerusalem have been re-united, and the relationship between London and the world, between self and society, has been transformed:

In my Exchanges every Land
Shall walk, & mine in every Land,
Mutual shall build Jerusalem:
Both heart in heart & hand in hand."⁴

1 Jerusalem, The Emanation.

2 "Blake managed to sell the four uncolored copies but [the copy from which the frontispiece at left was taken], the unrivalled masterpiece of illuminated printing, remained unsold at his death" (D. Bindman, in W. Blake, *Illuminated*, p. 297).

3 "Los' lamp casts the only apparent light, for only imagination [i.e., divinely inspired revelation to the creative human mind of the truths of the infinite and eternal world] can light up the [temporal and finite] world. Without it, Albion's world would remain dark. Imagination is also evident in the Gothic doorway that Los steps through on his way to save Albion, which connects Los' unfallen and Albion's fallen realms ... The wind apparent in Los' hair and garments, which blows through the door from the void, indicates the potential breath of life that Los' coming may revive. The contrast with Blake's illustration for *Gats* 15 is instructive ... There an aged, bent figure enters "Death's Door" as the wind blows from behind him into the grave. The reversal of the wind direction points to the absence of living breath beyond the grave ... [T]he outward breeze, the Gothic doorway [representing living form], Los' vigorous striding figure, and his glowing light oppose the death and darkness beyond, illustrating the possible enlightenment of a generation through imagination" (M. Doskow, *William Blake's Jerusalem*, pp. 26-27).

4 M. Marqusee, *Entering*.

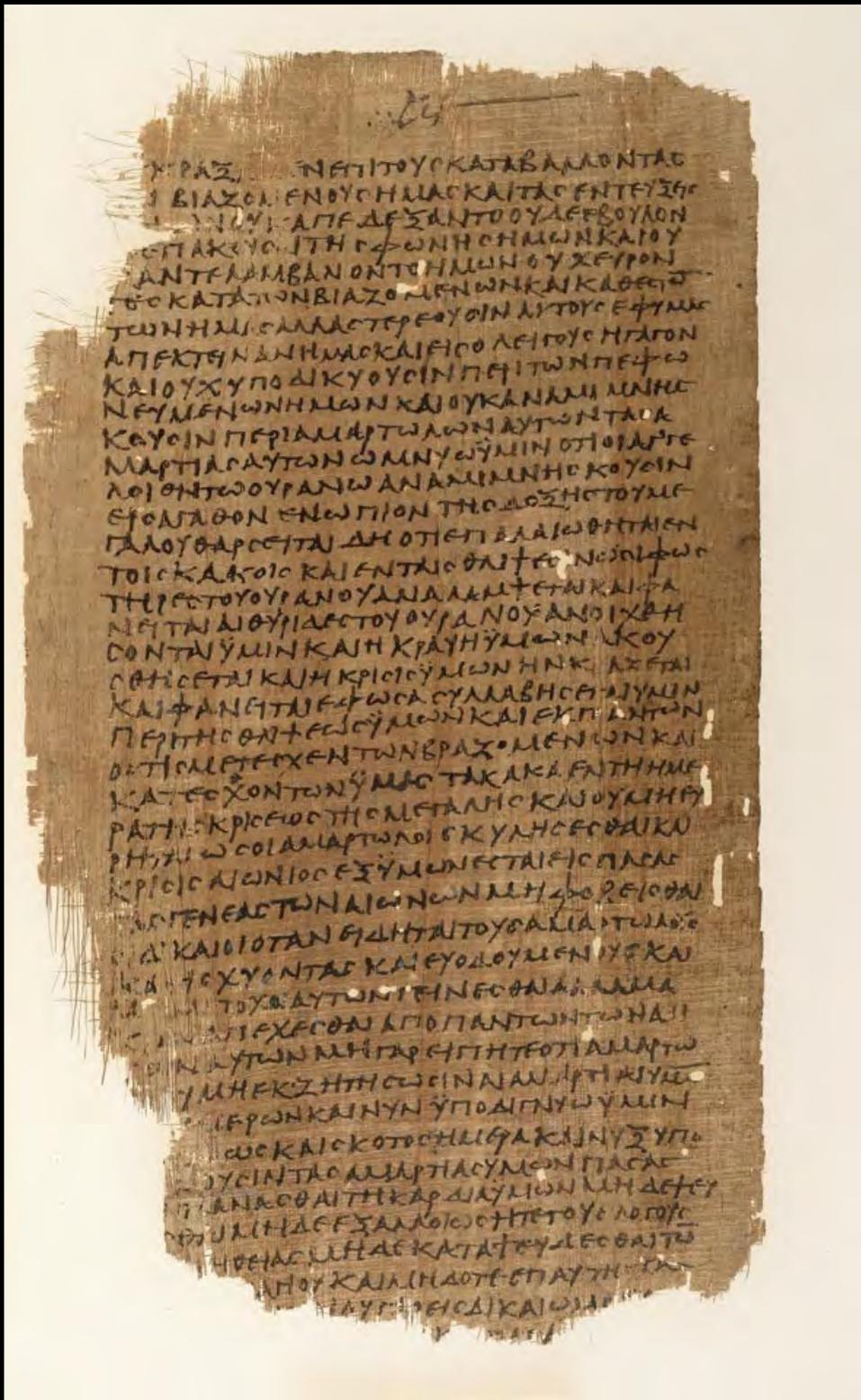


FIGURE 0-1. *Book of Enoch P, Chester Beatty XII, leaf 3 (Verso), 4th century*

“The back side of P.Mich.inv. 5552, showing portions of the *Book of Enoch* [*1 Enoch*] in Greek. This manuscript is part of the Chester Beatty Papyri, and is the 3rd leaf of the surviving manuscript, which also contained an unknown Christian homily attributed to Melito of Sardis. Most likely originated in Egypt. Currently housed at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor Library.”¹ The leaf shown includes the portions of *1 Enoch* cited in Jude 1:14-15.

1 P. Chester Beatty XII,

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Modern Revelation about Ancient Patriarchs

FEW other branches of Christianity revere Holy Scripture as do the Latter-day Saints. Paradoxically, no other Christian faith has felt such liberty — or rather such necessity — to add to and even revise it continually. This is because Latter-day Saints are not fundamentally a “People of the Book”¹ but instead a “People of Continuing Revelation.”² In other words, not only do they subscribe to the idea of an enlarged canon through official acceptance of three additional books of scripture besides the Bible, but they also accept the concept of an open and growing canon,³ regarding efforts to “harden on the all-sufficiency or only-sufficiency of any part of scripture” as tantamount “to prais[ing] the cup and reject[ing] the fountain.”⁴ Thus, members of the Church hold that sacred texts are not only susceptible to a “plainer translation”⁵ but also open to the possibility of significant expansion and elaboration through the living spirit of prophecy.⁶ To Latter-day Saints, a closed and immutable canon is inconsistent with the idea of God’s continuing revelation as expressed in the ninth Article of Faith: “We believe in all that God has revealed, all that he does now reveal, and we believe that he will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”⁷

In a paper written in 1985, George Nickelsburg explored a similar stance in early Christianity. This is the idea that “the early Christians, and some Jews before them, based their exclusivistic

1 See *Endnote 0-1*, p. 24.

2 D. H. Oaks, *Scripture Reading*, p. 7.

3 2 Nephi 29:3-14; A. B. Morrison, *Canon*, pp. 3-4. By way of contrast to the common Christian belief in a closed canon, Peterson laments that: “The creation of a canon commences when revelation is thought to have come to a halt, and in turn the concept of a canon reinforces the notion that revelation has ceased” (D. C. Peterson, *Muhammad* (2001), p. 597).

4 T. G. Madsen, *Essay*, p. xv. See *Endnote 0-2*, p. 24.

5 D&C 128:18.

6 J. F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 1902, pp. 36-37. See *Endnote 0-19*, p. 30.

7 Thus, Elder Neal A. Maxwell’s comment: “Today we carry convenient quadruple combinations of the scriptures. But one day, since more scriptures are coming, we may need to pull little red wagons brim with books” (N. A. Maxwell, *Flood*, p. 18). He added, “Of course, computers may replace wagons” (N. A. Maxwell, *Quote*, p. 298).

stance on the claim they had received *divine revelation*.⁸ Prominent among the sectarian Jews who accepted this claim were those who accepted purported revelations found within the collection of books we now call *1 Enoch* as well as the people of Qumran, who preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls. Likewise, Nickelsburg asserts that early Jewish Christians, although more open to gentile outsiders, appear “to have adopted the sectarian Jewish approach that asserted the validity of its position by claiming divine revelation. Salvation was tied exclusively to the person and activity of Jesus of Nazareth.”⁹ Nickelsburg’s description of the twofold irony of the Christian position will not be lost on those who realize its resemblance to the relationship between Mormonism and other branches of Christianity:¹⁰

A young, upstart group ... was asserting that it was more authentic than its parent group. And this attitude of superiority and exclusivism was derived, in part, from ideas and attitudes already present in the parent body.

Of course, Latter-day Saints are recognized as sharing a core of essential, biblically based beliefs in common with other Christians. Paramount among these beliefs is that salvation comes only “in and through the grace of God”¹¹ and “the name of Christ.”¹² We also agree with Nickelsburg’s commendable charge to all Christian scholars to “build wisely, responsibly, and with love both for those within the immediate community of faith and for those within the broader community.”¹³ However, we must recognize that the bold claim of continuing revelation is not a mere footnote to LDS teachings but the very heart of the faith. Mormons realize that denying this claim would be, to use the apt metaphor of Nickelsburg, more than “simply pulling a little theological splinter that has been the source of great irritation” in the interest of promoting “a new, wiser, and more loving and ecumenical age.” Instead, it would be tantamount to performing “radical surgery on a vital organ of the faith.”¹⁴ In submitting to such surgery, the patient would not merely be risking his life but rather ending it.

That the enthusiastic stance of welcome in the LDS faith for additional discoveries of the word of God includes parts of the Apocrypha — and also perhaps, certain more problematic pseudepigraphal writings of complex and uncertain provenance — is affirmed in a revelation that Joseph Smith received in 1833:¹⁵

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you concerning the Apocrypha — There are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correctly;

2 There are many things ... contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men

4 Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth;

5 And whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom;

Although Mormons do not count any of the pseudepigraphal works of Enoch among the books of their canon, the prophetic word that “whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit”¹⁶ from the Apocrypha leads us to consider seriously what light extracanonical

8 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Revealed Wisdom*, p. 73, emphasis added.

9 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

11 2 Nephi 10:24. Cf. Ephesians 2:8.

12 Mosiah 3:17. Cf. Acts 4:12.

13 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Revealed Wisdom*, p. 91.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 91.

15 D&C 91.

16 D&C 91:5.

writings can shed on our scripture, doctrine, and teachings — and vice versa. In such matters, seership and scholarship can go comfortably hand in hand. As Terryl S. Givens astutely observed: “Our contemporary condescension in this regard was clearly foreign to a prophet who showed the world he could translate gold plates written in Reformed Egyptian, then [a few years later] hired a Jewish schoolmaster to teach him Hebrew.”¹⁷

Givens¹⁸ notes that this paradoxical “two-pronged approach” to the search for religious truth is characteristic of Mormonism. It is “a group embrace of a rhetoric of absolute self-assurance about spiritual truths” revealed directly from God — “coexisting with a conception of education as the endless and eternal acquisition of the knowledge that leads to godhood.” The seriousness with which Joseph Smith took both aspects of this two-pronged approach “is to be fathomed from its timing and growing direction in the context of his own prophetic career: after the youthful leader had established his credentials as Prophet and translator, after he had personally manifested his power to reveal the fulness of saving truth directly from heaven, and after he claimed receipt of authority to perform all saving ordinances in the new church. At that moment when he had powerfully demonstrated to his followers the irrelevance of priestly training, clerical degrees, and scholarly credentials,” he opened a school where he, along with his followers, could acquire a classroom education.¹⁹ In a revelation given at the subsequent dedication of the first Mormon temple, the charge to the Saints to embrace a two-pronged vision of learning was explicit: “[S]eek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”²⁰

Carrying that vision of learning forward to our day, an enthusiastic cadre of Latter-day Saint scholars has essayed to discover and understand affinities between LDS expansions of biblical narratives and ancient sources from outside the Bible. With these efforts in mind, Truman G. Madsen wisely provided both caution and encouragement to such scholars:²¹

Surface resemblance may conceal profound difference. It requires competence, much goodwill and bold caution properly to distinguish what is remotely parallel, what is like, what is very like, and what is identical. It is harder still to trace these threads to original influences and beginnings. But on the whole the Mormon expects to find, not just in the Judeo-Christian background but in all religious traditions, elements of commonality which, if they do not outweigh elements of contrast, do reflect that all-inclusive diffusion of primal religious concern and contact with God—the light “which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”²² If the outcome of hard archeological, historical, and comparative discoveries in the past century is an embarrassment to exclusivistic readings of religion, that, to the Mormon, is a kind of confirmation and vindication. His faith assures him not only that Jesus anticipated his great predecessors (who were really successors) but that hardly a teaching or a practice is utterly distinct or peculiar or original in His earthly ministry. Jesus was not a plagiarist, unless that is the proper name for one who repeats himself. He was the original author. The gospel of Jesus Christ came with Christ in the meridian of time only because the gospel of Jesus Christ came from Christ in prior dispensations. He did not teach merely a new twist on a syncretic-Mediterranean tradition. His earthly ministry enacted what had been planned and anticipated “from before the foundations of the world,”²³ and from Adam down.²⁴

17 T. L. Givens, *Dialectic*.

18 T. L. Givens, *Paradox*, p. 74.

19 See, e.g., D&C 88:79.

20 D&C 109:7, 14. See also D&C 88:118, 88. See *Endnote 0-24*, p. 31.

21 T. G. Madsen, *Essay*, p. xvii.

22 John 1:9.

23 See, e.g., John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20; Alma 22:13; D&C 130:20; Moses 5:57; Abraham 1:3.

24 See *Endnote 0-3*, p. 24.

Transgressing and Transcending the Divine-Human Boundary

In a seminal article relating to the story of Noah, the eminent Genesis scholar Ronald Hendel makes the case that one of the most prominent themes in the first eleven chapters of the Bible is “a series of ... transgressions of boundaries” that had been set up in the beginning to separate mankind from the dwelling place of Divinity.²⁵ David Carr arrived at a similar conclusion, observing that both the pre-flood and post-flood stories of early mankind “end in the same place: a threat to the divine-human boundary and God’s work to reinforce it.”²⁶ Tryggve Mettinger also recognized the “stress on a borderline between the divine and human spheres ... in Genesis 1-11.”²⁷ Likewise, Robert Oden highlighted “human aspirations to divine status” as an underlying theme in all these stories, and that such “status “is ultimately denied them.”²⁸

This general thesis is useful as far as it goes. In the stories of the transgressions of Adam and Eve, of Cain, of Lamech, of the “sons of God” who married the “daughters of men,” and of the builders of the Tower of Babel, we cannot fail to observe the common thread of a God who places strict boundaries between the human and the divine. Surprisingly, however, a significant and opposite theme largely neglected by exegetes is that within some of these same chapters God is also portrayed as having sought to *erase* the divine-human boundary for a righteous few, drawing them into His very presence.²⁹ The prime examples of this motif are, of course, Enoch and Noah, of whom it was explicitly said that they “walked with God.”³⁰

We could say much more about the contrast in Genesis 1-11 between the limits set by God on the approach to the divine by transgressors on the one hand, and His ardent efforts to draw the righteous into His immediate presence on the other. In this regard, it is not without significance that many passages in these eleven chapters allude to the mythos of the temple in the Old Testament, where qualifications of purity and uprightness were integral to the granting of access to places of holiness.³¹ In this book, we aim to give this theme greater attention.³² In addition, we hope to provide a perspective that will underscore the personal relevance of these stories for contemporary readers.

Taking the Stories of Primeval History Seriously

Given their status as targets of humor and caricature, the well-worn stories of Adam, Eve, and Noah are sometimes difficult to take seriously. However, a thoughtful examination of the scriptural record of these characters will reveal not simply tales of “piety or ... inspiring

25 R. S. Hendel, *Demigods*, p. 23. See OVERVIEW Genesis 11, p. 379. See also the discussion by Hendel of Genesis 6:1-4 in H. W. Attridge *et al.*, *HarperCollins Study Bible*, p. 13, where he specifically includes the Garden of Eden, the mating of the sons of God with the daughters of men, and the Tower of Babel as examples of such transgressions in Genesis 1-11.

26 D. M. Carr, *Reading*, p. 239.

27 T. N. D. Mettinger, *Eden*, p. 127.

28 R. A. Oden, Jr., *Divine aspirations in Atrahasis and in Genesis 1-11*, pp. 211, 215.

29 See *Endnote 0-4*, p. 24.

30 Regarding the application of this phrase to Enoch and his people, see Moses 6:39, 7:69. Regarding Noah and his sons, see Moses 8:27. In addition, Abraham is commanded by the Lord to “walk before me” in Genesis 17:1, and Isaac speaks of “The Lord, before whom I walk” in Genesis 24:40. About possible reasons for the overlap and confusion between the characters of Noah, Enoch, and other patriarchs in the ancient literature, see H. W. Nibley, *Enoch*, pp. 22-55.

31 See, e.g., the discussion in J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 234-240.

32 For a preliminary discussion of these contrasting themes, see *ibid.*, pp. 342-351. On the Flood in the context of purification, see E. A. Harper, *It’s a Washout*; L. M. Morales, *Tabernacle Pre-Figured*, pp. 128-129.



FIGURE 0-2. Donald Duck Gathers the Animals to the Ark, 1999

adventures”³³ but rather carefully crafted narratives from a highly sophisticated culture that preserve “deep memories”³⁴ of revealed understanding. We do an injustice both to these marvelous records and to ourselves when we fail to pursue an appreciation of scripture beyond the initial level of cartoon cut-outs inculcated upon the minds of young children.³⁵ Hugh Nibley characterized the problem this way:³⁶

The stories of the Garden of Eden and the Flood have always furnished unbelievers with their best ammunition against believers, because they are the easiest to visualize, popularize, and satirize of any Bible accounts. Everyone has seen a garden and been caught in a pouring rain. It requires no effort of imagination for a six-year-old to convert concise and straightforward Sunday-school recitals into the vivid images that will stay with him for the rest of his life. These stories retain the form of the nursery tales they assume in the imaginations of small children, to be defended by grown-ups who refuse to distinguish between childlike faith and thinking as a child when it is time to “put away childish things.”³⁷ It is equally easy and deceptive to fall into adolescent disillusionment and with one’s emancipated teachers to smile tolerantly at the simple gullibility of bygone days, while passing stern moral judgment on the savage old God who damns Adam for eating the fruit He put in his way and, overreacting with impetuous violence, wipes out Noah’s neighbors simply for making fun of his boat-building on a fine summer’s day.³⁸

33 J. E. Seach, *Ancient Texts* 1995, p. vii.

34 M. Barker, *Hidden*, p. 34.

35 LaCocque observes: “To consider [such stories as tales] for children is only possible when the story is vaguely known, when it is considered from a distance, and with a preconceived feeling that nothing can be learned from so ‘naïve’ a tale” (A. LaCocque, *Trial*, pp. 10-11).

36 H. W. Nibley, *Before Adam*, p. 63.

37 1 Corinthians 13:11.

38 “Thomas Paine, in his 1794 treatise *The Age of Reason*, dismissed the Flood story in one line by saying: “The story of Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his Ark, drops to a level with the *Arabian Nights*, without the merit of being entertaining” (J. David Pleins, *When*, p. 19). Characterizing the view of contemporary scholarship, Elizabeth Harper observes: “Noah’s Ark still appeals as a colorful children’s toy, but otherwise it is a story much out of favor. It is, after all, historically ridiculous and even morally reprehensible. While it provides a fine example of source divisions for introductory biblical classes, exciting scholarly work seems to lie elsewhere” (E. A. Harper, *It’s All* (2013), p. 32). Cf. Richard Dawkins: “the legend of the animals going into the Ark two by two is charming, but the moral of the story of Noah is appalling” (R. Dawkins, *Delusion*, p. 237).



FIGURES 0-5, 0-6. Russell Crowe as Noah; A “Watcher” on the Attack

Unfortunately, Mesopotamian studies are no more exempt from such quackery than is Old Testament scholarship. The following description is given for FIGURE 0-4 by Sasha Lessin, PhD:⁴¹

Galzu tells Enki (depicted with his snake icon) to warn Ziasudra [*sic*] (touching the “wall” — probably a computer bank, depicted with Xs across the screens and slots for programs) of the Flood. Galzu guides Enki’s arm to convey tablet (possibly a computer or holo disk. The disk leaves Enki’s hand en route to Ziasudra’s computer).

Sensing that there is money to be made in Noah’s story, Hollywood has made sure that it is not left out of the fun. At left is Russell Crowe as Noah in a film adaptation that Paramount officially has called a “close adaptation of the Biblical story.”⁴² Bible readers will, of course, agree with director Darren Aronofsky’s description of Noah as “‘a dark, complicated character’ who experiences ‘real survivor’s guilt’ after surviving the Flood.”⁴³ Accordingly, he portrays the prophet with perfect scriptural fidelity as a “Mad Max-style warrior surviving in a pseudo post-apocalyptic world.”⁴⁴ Students of the Bible will also surely recognize the portrait at right above of one of the “Watchers,” depicted in exact correspondence to the graphic novel that inspired the movie as “eleven-foot-tall fallen angels with six arms and no wings.”⁴⁵

The profound accounts of primeval history deserve better treatment. To understand them for what they are, we need to bring our best to the task: the powerful tools of modern scholarship, the additional light shed by modern revelation, and, of no less importance, the consecrated dedication of inquiring minds and honest hearts diligently seeking divine inspiration. The simple fantasies of a “fanciful and flowery and heated imagination”⁴⁶ will not suffice.

41 S. Lessin, Galzu.

42 P. Hall, *Just How Much*. See E. D. Cohen *et al.*, *After Me*, for their analysis of three popular “apocalyptic” films with respect to their a “Noahide Apocalyptic Template.”

43 Noah (film).

44 P. Hall, *Just How Much*.

45 *Ibid.*

46 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 25 March 1839, p. 137.

Toward a “Literal” Interpretation of Scripture

The Prophet Joseph Smith held the view that scripture should be “understood precisely as it reads.”⁴⁷ Consistent with this view, our objective in this book will be to render “literal” interpretations of the biblical accounts of Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel. It must be realized, however, that what premoderns understood to be “literal” interpretations of scripture are not the same as what most people understand them to be in our day. Whereas modernists⁴⁸ typically apply the term “literal” to accounts that provide clinical accuracy in the journalistic dimensions of who, what, when, and where, premoderns were more apt to understand “literal” in the sense of “what the letters, i.e., the words say.” These are two very different modes of interpretation. As James Faulconer observed: “‘What *x* says’ [i.e., the premodern idea of “literal”] and ‘what *x* describes *accurately*’ [i.e., the modernist idea of “literal”] do not mean the same, even if the first is a description.”⁴⁹

Consider, for example, Joseph Smith’s description of the Book of Mormon translation process. An emphasis consistent with modernist interests appears in the detailed descriptions given by some of the Prophet’s contemporaries of the size and appearance of the instruments used and the procedure by which the words of the ancient text were made known to him. These kinds of accounts appeal to us as modernists — the more physical details the better — because we want to know what “actually happened” as he translated. Note, however, that Joseph Smith declined to relate such specifics himself even in response to direct questioning in private company from believing friends.⁵⁰ The only explicit statement he made about the translation process is his testimony that it occurred “by the gift and power of God,”⁵¹ a description that avoids reinforcing the misleading impression that we can come to an understanding of “what really happened” through “objective” accounts of external observers. Of course, there is no reason to throw doubt on the idea that the translation process relied on instruments and procedures such as those described by Joseph Smith’s contemporaries. However, by restricting his description to the statement that the translation occurred “by the gift and power of God,” the Prophet disclaimed the futile effort to make these sacred events intelligible to the modernist literalist. Instead he pointed our attention to what mattered most: that the translation was accomplished by divine means.⁵² Faulconer argues that insistence on a “literal” interpretation of such sacred events, in the contemporary clinical sense of the term, may result in “rob[bing that event] of its status as a way of understanding the world.”⁵³ Elaborating more fully on the limitations of modernist descriptions of scriptural events, he observes that the interest of premoderns:⁵⁴

... was not in deciding what the scriptures *portray*, but in what they *say*. They do not take the scriptures to be picturing something for us, but to be telling us the truth of the world, of its

47 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 29 January 1843, p. 161.

48 We use the term “modernists” rather than “moderns” to describe those who hold this view of interpretation in order to make it clear that this is not the only contemporary point of view possible. For example, many who would describe their perspective as “postmodern” are critical of the modernist view. See *Endnote 0-21*, p. 30.

49 J. E. Faulconer, *Incarnation*, p. 44, emphasis added.

50 In response to a request in 1831 by his brother Hyrum to explain the translation process more fully, Joseph Smith said that “it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and ... it was not expedient for him to relate these things” (J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 25–26 October 1831, 1:220). For more on the Prophet’s reluctance to share details of sacred events, see R. O. Barney, *Joseph Smith’s Visions*; R. Nicholson, *Cowdery Conundrum*.

51 *Ibid.*, 4 January 1833, 1:315, in a parallel to the wording found in Omni 1:20 that was later taken up in the account and testimony of the Three Witnesses (J. Smith, Jr., *Histories, 1832-1844*, pp. 318-323). See also D&C 1:29, 20:8.

52 See *Endnote 0-22*, p. 30.

53 J. E. Faulconer, *Dorrien*, p. 426.

54 J. E. Faulconer, *Incarnation*, pp. 44-45, emphasis added. Cf. J. E. Faulconer, *Study*, pp. 124-133.

FIGURE 0-7. *Pouring Liquid*

things, its events, and its people, a truth that cannot be told apart from its situation in a divine, symbolic ordering.⁵⁵

Of course, that is not to deny that the scriptures tell about events that actually happened... However, premodern interpreters do not think it sufficient (or possible) to portray the real events of real history without letting us see them in the light of that which gives them their significance — their reality, the enactment of which they are a part — as history, namely the symbolic order that they incarnate. Without that light, portrayals cannot be accurate. A bare description of the physical movements of certain persons at a certain time is not history (assuming that such bare descriptions are even possible).

“Person A raised his left hand, turning it clockwise so that .03 milliliters of a liquid poured from a vial in that hand into a receptacle situated midway between A and B” does not mean the same as “Henry poured poison in to Richard’s cup.” Only the latter could be a historical claim (and even the former is no bare description).

Of course, none of this should be taken as implying that precise times, locations, and dimensions are unimportant to the stories of scripture. Indeed, details given in Genesis about, for example, the size of the Ark, the place where it landed, and the date of its debarkation are crucial to its interpretation. However, when such details are present, we can usually be sure that they are not meant merely to add a touch of realism to the account, but rather to help the reader make mental associations with scriptural stories and religious concepts found elsewhere in the Bible — in the case of Noah, for example, these associations might echo the story of Creation or might anticipate the Tabernacle of Moses. It is precisely such backward and forward reverberations of related themes in disparate passages of scripture, rather than a photorealistic rendering of the Flood, that will be the focus this commentary.

Though we can no more reconstruct the story of Noah from the geology of flood remains than we can re-create the discourse of Abinadi from the ruins of Mesoamerican buildings, we are fortunate to have a scriptural record that can be “understood precisely as it reads.”⁵⁶ The literal understanding we seek of the story of Noah will be found in an unraveling of the interconnections among what Hendel calls “the tangled plots of Genesis,”⁵⁷ and in an

55 Cf. A. G. Zornberg, *Genesis*, pp 31-32.

56 J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 29 January 1843, p. 161.

57 See R. S. Hendel, *Tangled Plots*

	<i>Chaos (flood)</i>	<i>Creation (exodus)</i>	<i>Covenant</i>
Genesis	Genesis 1:2	Genesis 1:3-25	Genesis 1:26-31
Genesis	Genesis 7:17-8:9	Genesis 8:10-19	Genesis 8:20-9:17
Exodus	Exodus 1:22, 2:3-5	Exodus 14-15	Exodus 19-24, 32-34
Deutero-Isaiah	Isaiah 43:2, 48:10, 54:7-9	Isaiah 40, 41:18, 43:19, 46:6-8, 50:2, 51:9-11, 51:15	Isaiah 51:3, 52:7-12, 54 <i>passim</i> , 55 <i>passim</i> (esp. v. 3)
Pseudepigrapha	<i>Jubilees</i> 5:20-6:3, <i>T. Naphtali</i> 6:10-10, <i>1 Enoch</i> 65-66, 83, 89:1-9	<i>4 Ezra</i> 13:1-13 <i>1 Enoch</i> 89:10-40 <i>2 Enoch</i> 24-30	<i>Jubilees</i> 6:4-16
Gospels	John 1:1-5, 14-16	<i>Baptism:</i> Matthew 3, Mark 1:3-8, Luke 3:2-17, John 1:6-8, 19-28 <i>Stilling Storm:</i> Matthew 8:18, 23-27; Mark 4:35-41, Luke 8:22-25 <i>Walking on Sea:</i> Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:47-52 John 6:15-21, (21:1-14) Revelation 12:7-9, 21:1-22:5	Matthew 5-7

FIGURE 0-8. *Typology in Biblical Tradition*

interpretive approach that attempts to comprehend how the individual story plots fit within larger meta-plots throughout the Pentateuch — and sometimes further afield.⁵⁸ The table above, derived by Wyatt from the work of A. J. Wensinck,⁵⁹ shows “a typological reiteration of the same literary nexus [of chaos/flood, creation/exodus, and covenant] throughout the tradition, canonical and non-canonical.”⁶⁰ A neglected aspect of genius in the account of Noah, as in much of scripture, is in the deliberate structuring of the elements of the stories in a manner that highlights important typological patterns for the attentive reader.⁶¹ Note also that when finely tuned perception meets the spirit of revelation and prophecy, as happened with Joseph Smith, even lost puzzle pieces from the past can be supplied when required. As a stunning example, consider how the Prophet exercised his gifts to expand a few heavily redacted verses in Genesis into two rich chapters on the ministry of Enoch — one of the greatest treasures of the Restoration.

Understanding the Temple through Scripture — and Vice Versa

The Latter-day Saints understand that they should be not only a temple-worthy and temple-going people, but also a temple-understanding people.⁶² Because so much of its content echoes ideas relevant to LDS temple ordinances, the book of Moses and Genesis 1-11 are ideal starting points for a scripture-based study of temple themes. For example, it has been long recognized that the story of Noah recapitulates the stories of the Creation,⁶³ the Garden,⁶⁴ and the Fall of Adam and Eve.⁶⁵ What has been generally underappreciated by current scholarship, however, is the depth of the relationship between these stories and the

58 See *Endnote 0-8*, p. 26.

59 Cited in N. Wyatt, *Water*, pp. 224-225.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 224.

61 See *Endnote 0-9*, p. 26.

62 J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 1-3.

63 See *Endnote 0-5*, p. 25.

64 See, e.g., A. J. Tomasino, *History*, p. 129.

65 See, e.g., J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 80; A. J. Tomasino, *History*, pp. 129-130.



FIGURE 0-9. *Finding the Shipwrecked Sailor*
Thomas Rowlandson, 1756-1827

liturgy and layout of temples, not only in Israel but also throughout the ancient Near East.⁶⁶ And this relationship goes two ways. Not only do accounts of primeval history appear as a significant part of ancient temple worship, but also in striking abundance, themes echoing temple architecture, furnishings, ritual, and covenants have been deeply woven into the sacred stories themselves. Whereas scholars such as John Walton⁶⁷ and Mark Smith⁶⁸ have shed light on how the Genesis description of the seven days of Creation relates to cosmic temple inauguration, as yet no one seems to have explored with a similar degree of thoroughness the temple themes in the stories of Noah, Enoch, and the Tower of Babel.

Members of the Church often have a tendency to approach learning about the temple in a piecemeal fashion. For example, they focus their primary attention on understanding the meaning of specific symbols used in scripture and temple worship. While there is much that can be learned from this kind of study, most of us not only struggle with the meaning of individual concepts and symbols, but also — and perhaps more crucially — in understanding how these concepts and symbols fit together as a whole system. The symbols and concepts of the temple are best understood, not in isolation, but within the full context of the plan of salvation to which they belong.⁶⁹

G. K. Chesterton has compared our position as mortals struggling to apprehend the divine to that of a “sailor who awakens from a deep sleep and discovers treasure strewn about, relics from a civilization he can barely remember. One by one he picks up the relics — gold coins, a compass, fine clothing — and tries to discern their meaning.”⁷⁰ Gradually, glimmers of recognition begin to emerge. However, the re-discovery of the significance of each item comes not so much through careful scrutiny of its outward features as it does through specific recollections of its former place as a natural part of the distant world where he once lived. The point of the illustration is that the answers to our most important

66 See, e.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *Tree of Knowledge*.

67 J. H. Walton, *Lost World*; J. H. Walton, *Genesis 1*.

68 M. S. Smith, *Priestly Vision*.

69 See *Endnote 0-23*, p. 30.

70 P. Yancey, introduction to G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, p. xiii.

questions about God cannot be found merely through piecemeal examination of the relics of religion. Specifically, we profit from careful scrutiny of individual religious symbols only in proportion to our efforts to “seek learning, even by study and also by faith”⁷¹ about the overall order from which they derive their significance. To the degree we lack revealed knowledge about this sacred order of things, we may be easily distracted by glittering details while failing to ascertain the “weightier matters”⁷² of divine instruction. In short, the greatest benefits from temple worship will come, not to those who begin their learning by trying to comprehend the minute particulars of the ordinances, but rather to those who are prepared with an understanding of the Gospel as a whole — especially the all-embracing doctrines of the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement as revealed throughout scripture.

Just as thorough understanding of scripture is a prerequisite to appreciating temple ordinances, so a comprehension of temple-related concepts is an invaluable key to the meaning of many difficult passages of scripture. Nowhere is this more true than in the first chapters of the Bible. Without a firm grasp on the teachings and ordinances of the temple, we will miss the gist of the primeval history. True, we may “race along with the seductively captivating narratives,” feeling that we are “largely grasping what is going on, even if some exotic or minor details are not immediately apparent.”⁷³ However, this mode of reading scripture — an approach that focuses on an interpretation of the stories only as *presentations* of historical characters and events — misses the point. Though the authors of scripture “must have actually *experienced* ... the meaning of ... ‘the sacred world,’” their writings are “not exactly in a manner of a scientific-ethnographic description and report”⁷⁴ but rather are composed *representationally*⁷⁵ “as foundations for collective practices and identity.”⁷⁶ The characters and events of the stories of Noah, Enoch, and the Tower of Babel, like the story of Adam and Eve, are “incorporated into the sacred world”⁷⁷ of rites and ordinances and must be understood accordingly. On the other hand, insight into the meaning of these stories “is obscured by the recontextualization of the tradition in a [merely] ‘historical’ account.”⁷⁸

Frequently Asked Questions about JST Genesis

How would you characterize the relationship between Science and Mormonism?

Science and Mormonism have nearly always been on very friendly terms, with Church members sharing the deep conviction that, as expressed by former scientist and apostle Elder James E. Talmage, “within the gospel of Jesus Christ there is room and place for every truth thus far learned by man, or yet to be made known.”⁷⁹ Expressing the welcoming stance of the Church for religious and moral truth from all sources, President Brigham Young stated:⁸⁰

“Mormonism” ... embraces every principle pertaining to life and salvation ... no matter who has it. If the [unbeliever] has got truth, it belongs to “Mormonism.” The truth and sound doctrine possessed by [other churches], and they have a great deal, all belong to this Church ... All that is good, lovely, and praiseworthy belongs to this Church ... “Mormonism” includes all truth. There is no truth but what belongs to the Gospel.

71 D&C 109:7, 14. See also D&C 88:118.

72 Matthew 23:23.

73 A. S. Kohav, *Sôd Hypothesis*, p. 48.

74 *Ibid.*

75 See *Endnote 0-6*, p. 25.

76 R. S. Hendel, *Cultural Memory*, p. 28.

77 D. Callender, *Adam*, p. 211.

78 *Ibid.*, p. 212. For a related view, see J. H. Sailhamer, *Meaning*, pp. 100-148. See *Endnote 0-7*, p. 25.

79 J. E. Talmage, *Earth and Man*, p. 252.

80 B. Young, 8 April 1867, p. 375.

With regard to scientific truth, President Young's approach was no less open and all-embracing. As Philip Barlow summarizes:⁸¹

Brigham Young's position was in one sense more "liberal" even than that of [many contemporaries]. Not a scholar himself and easily put off by what he saw as scholars' ... pretentious ways, Young still wished to distance the Mormon response to science from what he took to be the common Christian reaction. Widespread infidelity in the world did not surprise him, he said, because religious teachers often advanced notions "in opposition to ... facts demonstrated by science," making it difficult for honest, informed people to embrace the claims of religion. Geology, to take a specific instance, "is a true science; not that I would say for a moment that all the conclusions and deductions of its professors are true, but its leading principles are; they are facts ..." "[Our] geologists... tell us that this earth has been in existence for thousands and millions of years... [and Mormonism] differ[s] from the Christian world, for our religion will not clash with the facts of science."

Moreover, President Young said:⁸²

The idea that the religion of Christ is one thing, and science is another, is a mistaken idea, for there is no true religion without true science, and consequently there is no true science without true religion.

Subsequent Presidents and General Authorities of the Church have advanced similar views about the ultimate compatibility of religious and scientific truths and, with notably few exceptions, have maintained markedly positive attitudes toward both the methods and conclusions of mainstream science and the advance of modern technology. A barometer for the positive attitude toward science among the membership of the Church has been a series of studies over the last several decades documenting numbers of scientists with backgrounds in different faith groups.⁸³ Personally, we note that in most of the academic meetings in which we have participated, Mormons are overrepresented when compared with their percentage of the general population.

With respect to the creation accounts in scripture, the Latter-day Saints have avoided some of the serious clashes with science that have troubled other religious traditions. For example, members of the Church have no quarrel with the concept of a very old earth whose "days" of creation seem to have been of very long, overlapping, and varying duration.⁸⁴ Joseph Smith is remembered as having taught that the heavenly bodies were created long prior to the earth: "The starry hosts were worlds and suns and universes, some of which had being millions of ages before the earth had physical form."⁸⁵ Consistent with this stance, LDS scientist David Bailey has competently summarized scientific inadequacies and theological incompatibilities of the creationist movement in both its "young earth" and "intelligent design" forms.⁸⁶ Despite what some advocates of a creationist agenda would have people believe, to question specific features of the theories they have advanced is not tantamount to rejecting the concept of a Divine Creator. Many devout scientists and other scholars have found other ways to reconcile their scientific views on the origin of the universe with their belief in God.⁸⁷

81 P. L. Barlow, *Bible*, pp. 90-91; P. L. Barlow, *Bible (2013)*, p. 98. See B. Young, 14 May 1871, pp. 115-117.

82 B. Young, 3 May 1874, p. 52.

83 See, e.g., the summary in J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 526-527, 707-708.

84 Alma 40:8; B. R. McConkie, *Christ and the Creation*, p. 11; B. Young, 17 September 1876, pp. 231-232.

85 E. W. Tullidge, *Women*, p. 178.

86 See, e.g., D. H. Bailey, *Latter-day*; D. H. Bailey, *Church and Evolution*; D. H. Bailey, *What's Wrong*; D. H. Bailey, *Mormonism*; D. H. Bailey, *Deceiver*.

87 For examples of views from Mormon scholars and scientists, see <http://mormonscholarstestify.org/>

With respect to beliefs about the origin of man, the relevant article in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* emphasizes the point that acceptance of essential doctrinal claims rather than belief in a particular modus operandi for the creation of man is ultimately the determinant of Mormon orthodoxy.⁸⁸ As evidence of current LDS openness to the study of the latest scientific advances in relevant fields, note that the first formal class in evolution was instituted at BYU in fall 1971 with the First Presidency's approval. It is currently a required part of the core curriculum of BYU students in the biological sciences. Evolutionary biology has become "one of the largest and most successful graduate programs at BYU,"⁸⁹ with professors publishing in major evolutionary conferences and journals. Givens provides a brief summary of efforts of Mormon scientists who "not only incorporate evolutionary science, but break new ground in the field."⁹⁰ Additionally, Mormon science symposia give opportunities for LDS scientists to share their views.⁹¹ Although differences of opinions exist among members of the Church on some science matters, the key point is that such differences are not used as criteria for temple worthiness or callings to church leadership.

Was the Pentateuch, As We Have It, Authored Entirely by Moses?

An impressive array of evidences for the seeming heterogeneity of sources within the first five books of the Bible have converged to form the basis of the Documentary Hypothesis, a broad scholarly consensus whose most able popular expositor has been Richard Friedman.⁹² However, even those who find the Documentary Hypothesis — or some variant of it⁹³ — compelling have good reason to admire the resulting literary product on its own terms. For example, in the case of the two Creation chapters, Friedman himself writes that in the scriptural version of Genesis we have a text "that is greater than the sum of its parts."⁹⁴ Sailhamer aptly summarizes the situation when he writes that "Genesis is characterized by both an easily discernible unity and a noticeable lack of uniformity."⁹⁵

The idea that a series of individuals may have had a hand in the authorship and redaction of Genesis should not be foreign to readers of the Book of Mormon, where inspired editors have described explicitly the process by which they wove separate, overlapping records into the finished scriptural narrative. However, in contrast to the carefully controlled prophetic redaction of the Book of Mormon, we do not know how much of the editing of the Old Testament may have taken place with less inspiration and authority. Joseph Smith wrote: "I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors."⁹⁶

In this volume of commentary, we have treated the book of Moses primarily from a canonical perspective, largely ignoring the important but rather complex questions about how primary sources may have been authored and combined to form the scriptural text as we now have it.⁹⁷

88 J. L. Sorenson, *Origin*.

89 M. R. Ash, *Myth*, pp. 32-33.

90 T. L. Givens, *Paradox*, pp. 209-210, 378-379 nn. 59-64.

91 See, e.g., the *2013 LDS Life Science Research Symposium*, hosted as a BYU Continuing Education Conference (<http://religion.byu.edu/event/lds-life-science-research-symposium-july-18-20>), and the *2013 Symposium on Science and Mormonism: Cosmos, Earth, and Man*, organized by *The Interpreter Foundation* (<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com>).

92 See, e.g., R. E. Friedman, *Who*; R. E. Friedman, *Hidden*.

93 See *Endnote 0-10*, p. 27.

94 R. E. Friedman, *Commentary*, p. 16.

95 J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 5.

96 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 15 October 1843, p. 327.

97 For an in-depth LDS perspective on the Documentary Hypothesis and other questions relating to Higher

Is JST Genesis in a “Final” Form?

Although we do not think it is necessary to believe that every word in our book of Genesis came from the pen of Moses, we are fully persuaded that Joseph Smith made his revisions as the result of efforts to fulfill a prophetic mandate from God.

However, we think it would be a mistake to assume that this work of scripture is currently in any sort of “final” form — if indeed such perfection in expression could ever be attained within the confines of what Joseph Smith called our “little, narrow prison, almost as it were, total darkness of paper, pen and ink; and a crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language.”⁹⁸ As Robert J. Matthews, a pioneer of modern scholarship on the Joseph Smith Translation, aptly put it, “any part of the translation might have been further touched upon and improved by additional revelation and emendation by the Prophet.”⁹⁹

Though Joseph Smith was careful in his efforts to render a faithful translation of the Bible, he was no naïve advocate of the inerrancy or finality of scriptural language.¹⁰⁰ For instance, although in some cases his Bible translation attempted to resolve blatant inconsistencies among different accounts of the Creation and the life of Christ, he did not attempt to merge these sometimes divergent perspectives on the same events into a single harmonized version. Of course, having multiple accounts of these important stories should not be seen a defect or inconvenience. Differences in perspective between such accounts — and even seeming inconsistencies — composed “in [our] weakness, after the manner of [our] language, that [we] might come to understanding,”¹⁰¹ can be an aid rather than a hindrance to human comprehension, perhaps serving disparate sets of readers or diverse purposes to some advantage.

In translating the Bible, Joseph Smith’s criterion for the acceptability of a given reading was typically pragmatic rather than absolute. For example, after quoting a verse from Malachi in a letter to the Saints, he admitted that he “might have rendered a plainer translation.” However, he said that his wording of the verse was satisfactory in this case because the words were “sufficiently plain to suit [the] purpose as it stands.”¹⁰² This pragmatic approach is also evident both in the scriptural passages cited to him by heavenly messengers and in his preaching and translations. In these instances, he often varied the wording of Bible verses to suit the occasion.¹⁰³

There is another reason we should not think of the book of Moses as being in its “final” form. Our study of the translations, teachings, and revelations of Joseph Smith has convinced us that he sometimes knew much more about certain sacred matters than he taught publicly. Indeed, in some cases, we know that the Prophet deliberately delayed the publication of early temple-related revelations connected with his work on the JST until several years after he initially received them.¹⁰⁴ Even after Joseph Smith was well along in the translation process,

Criticism, see D. E. Bokovoy, *Book Which Thou Shalt Write*.

98 J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 27 November 1832, 1:299.

99 R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, p. 215.

100 For example, Gerrit Dirkmaat gives examples of Joseph Smith’s efforts to revise and update his Doctrine and Covenants revelations as they were prepared for publication (G. Dirkmaat, *Great*, pp. 56-57).

101 D&C 1:24.

102 D&C 128:18.

103 See *Endnote 0-12*, p. 27.

104 For example, Bachman has argued convincingly that nearly all of D&C 132 was revealed to the Prophet as he worked on the first half of JST Genesis (D. W. Bachman, *New Light*). This was more than a decade before 1843, when the revelation was shared with Joseph Smith’s close associates.

he seems to have believed that God did not intend for him to publish the JST in his lifetime. For example, writing to W. W. Phelps in 1832, he said: “I would inform you that [the Bible translation] will not go from under my hand during my natural life for correction, revisal, or printing and the will of [the] Lord be done.”¹⁰⁵ Although in later years Joseph Smith reversed his position and apparently made serious efforts to prepare the manuscript of the JST for publication, his own statement makes clear that initially he did not feel authorized to share publicly all he had produced — and learned — during the translation process. Indeed, a prohibition against indiscriminate sharing of some revelations, which parallels similar cautions found in pseudepigrapha,¹⁰⁶ is explicit in the book of Moses when it says of some particularly sacred portions of the account: “Show them not unto any except them that believe.”¹⁰⁷ Such admonitions are consistent with a remembrance of a statement by Joseph Smith that he intended to go back and rework some portions of the Bible translation to add in truths he was previously “restrained . . . from giving in plainness and fulness.”¹⁰⁸

Does the Book of Moses Restore the “Original” Version of Genesis?

LDS teachings and scripture clearly imply that Moses learned of the Creation and the Fall in vision and was told to write it. Moreover, there are revelatory passages in the book of Moses that have remarkable congruencies with ancient texts. However, we think it fruitless to rely on JST Genesis as a means for uncovering a Moses *Urtext*. Even if certain revelatory passages in the book of Moses were found to be direct translations of ancient documents — as was, apparently, D&C 7 — it is impossible to establish whether or not they once existed as an actual part of some sort of “original” manuscript of Genesis. Mormons understand that the primary intent of modern revelation is for divine guidance to latter-day readers, not to provide precise matches to texts from other times. Because this is so, in fact we would expect to find deliberate deviations from the content and wording of ancient manuscripts in Joseph Smith’s translations in the interest of clarity and relevance to modern readers. As one LDS apostle expressed it, “the Holy Spirit does not quote the Scriptures, but gives Scripture.”¹⁰⁹ If we keep this perspective in mind, we will be less surprised with the appearance of New Testament terms such as “Jesus Christ” in Joseph Smith’s chapters on Enoch when the title “the Son of Man” would be more in line with ancient Enoch texts.

During the process of translation, Joseph Smith made several types of changes. These changes ranged from “long revealed additions that have little or no biblical parallel, such as the visions of Moses and Enoch” and the passage on Melchizedek, to “common-sense” changes and interpretive additions, to “grammatical improvements, technical clarifications, and modernization of terms” — the latter being the most common type of change.¹¹⁰ Of course, even in the case of passages that seem to be explicitly revelatory, it remained to the Prophet to exercise considerable personal effort in rendering these experiences into words.¹¹¹ As Kathleen Flake puts it, Joseph Smith did not see himself as “God’s stenographer. Rather, he was an interpreting reader, and God the confirming authority.”¹¹²

105 J. Smith, Jr., *Writings 2002*, 31 July 1832, p. 273. See *Endnote 0-11*, p. 27.

106 See *Endnote 0-13*, p. 28.

107 Moses 1:43. See also Moses 4:32: “See thou show them unto no man, until I command you, except to them that believe.”

108 The quoted words are from Mormon Apostle George Q. Cannon’s remembrance (G. Q. Cannon, *Life (1907)*, p. 129 n.): “We have heard President Brigham Young state that the Prophet before his death had spoken to him about going through the translation of the scriptures again and perfecting it upon points of doctrine which the Lord had restrained him from giving in plainness and fulness at the time of which we write.”

109 H. M. Smith *et al.*, *Commentary*, p. 350.

110 P. L. Barlow, *Bible*, pp. 51-53; P. L. Barlow, *Bible (2013)*, pp. 55-57.

111 See, e.g., D&C 9:7-9.

112 K. Flake, *Translating Time*, pp. 507-508; cf. G. Underwood, *Revelation*, pp. 76-81, 83-84.

With respect to the translation of the Book of Mormon, Royal Skousen argues that the words chosen for the English text were given under “tight control.”¹¹³ By way of contrast, however, Skousen questions if one should assume that every change made in the JST constitutes revealed text. Besides arguments that can be made on the basis of the modifications themselves, there are questions regarding the reliability and degree of supervision given to the scribes who transcribed, copied, and prepared the text for publication. Differences are also apparent in the nature of the translation process that took place at different stages of the work. For example, whereas a significant proportion of the Genesis passages canonized as the book of Moses look like “a word-for-word revealed text,” evidence from a study of two sections in the New Testament that were translated twice indicates that the later “New Testament JST is not being revealed word-for-word, but largely depends upon Joseph Smith’s varying responses to the same difficulties in the text.”¹¹⁴

For these reasons, LDS scholars should be wary of claiming that the JST, taken as a whole, constitutes a restoration of the “original” text of the Bible.

Was Any of the Joseph Smith Translation Directly Received in Vision?

Some aspects of the JST, possibly including the comprehensive understanding of the Creation and the Fall that both Moses and Joseph Smith received, may have first come in vision and only later have been put into words. Regarding such visionary experiences, Lorenzo Brown remembered Joseph Smith as saying:¹¹⁵

After I got through translating the Book of Mormon, I took up the Bible to read with the Urim and Thummim. I read the first chapter of Genesis, and I saw the things as they were done, I turned over the next and the next, and the whole passed before me like a grand panorama; and so on chapter after chapter until I read the whole of it. I saw it all!

However, even if this account is accurate, we do not think that Joseph Smith recorded in a direct fashion everything that he saw and understood relating to the material in the book of Moses. He seems to have emended the biblical text only to the degree he felt necessary and authorized to do so, running roughshod, as it were, over the divisions of biblical source texts generally accepted by scholars. Rather than compose a completely new account of Creation and the Fall, Joseph Smith wove his changes piece-by-piece into the existing Genesis account. As a result, in his effort to fulfill his divine mandate to “translate” scripture, the Prophet gives us enough revised and expanded material in the book of Moses to significantly impact our understanding of important doctrinal and historical topics, but does not rework existing KJV verses to the point they become unrecognizable to those familiar with the Bible.

In Summary, What Do We Make of the Book of Moses?

The acceptance of the book of Moses as part of the LDS scriptural canon and, more generally, the premise that the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible may contain something more than naïve personal speculations on passages that perplexed the Prophet has not only been grounds for amusement for many non-Mormons but also has drawn criticism from some within the tradition of the Restoration. Consider the following quotation from former

113 R. Skousen, *Tight Control*.

114 R. Skousen, *Earliest*, pp. 456-470. For the original study, see K. P. Jackson *et al.*, *Two Passages*.

115 Lorenzo Brown in “Sayings of Joseph, by Those Who Heard Him at Different Times,” *Joseph Smith Jr. Papers*, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, UT, cited in K. Flake, *Translating Time*, p. 506 n. 31. Flake notes: “Brown’s statement is based on his recollection in 1880 of a conversation that occurred in 1832. For a discussion about the reliability of this account, see R. J. Matthews, *Plainer*, pp. 25-26, n. 12. Elder Orson F. Whitney reported a similar experience in more recent times — see *Moses 7 GLEANINGS*, p. 177.

Community of Christ President W. Grant McMurray who, in a 2006 address to the John Whitmer Historical Association, said:¹¹⁶

I grew up being taught that not only did we have the original church restored, but we were also given the Bible in its perfected, pristine form resulting from Joseph Smith's call to translate it under the influence of the Holy Spirit. We have known for decades that it is not a restoration of the original text. That would be even more compelling a statement if there were such a thing as an original text of the Bible. What we do have is a theological commentary by Joseph Smith, demonstrably incomplete, that got some of the most significant scriptural language, particularly the theology of grace so beautifully expressed in the Pauline letters and butchered in the Inspired Version [i.e., the JST]. It is time to identify it properly as a product of Joseph Smith's fertile and creative mind. I have not preached from it for decades. There are many fine versions available based on current scholarship and with poetic and literary power. The Inspired Version should have no standing as an authoritative Biblical version for the Church.

Although recognizing that the above statement of President McMurray does not represent the view of all members of the Community of Christ, sadly, it still expresses the opinion of many people today.

It is our firm witness that the book of Moses is a priceless prophetic reworking of the book of Genesis, made with painstaking effort under divine direction. Although neither "complete" nor "inerrant," it is a text of inestimable value that should be one of the centerpieces of our gospel study. With respect to yet unrevealed portions of the book of Abraham, a companion to the book of Moses, Hugh Nibley reminds us:¹¹⁷

Important parts of the Pearl of Great Price which are still being held back include "writings that cannot be revealed unto the world; but is [sic] to be had in the holy Temple of God,"¹¹⁸ "ought not to be revealed at the present time."¹¹⁹ Years ago, when we cited some passages from what we called an Egyptian endowment,¹²⁰ without elaborating, many Latter-day Saints quietly recognized their own temple endowment. Important things are still expressly withheld which "ought not to be revealed at the present time"; these include Facsimile 2, figures 12-21. For some of the secrets there is a standing invitation: "If the world can find out these numbers, so let it be. Amen."¹²¹ That was over a century and a half ago, and the invitation to search is still open.

About This Book

Arrangement of the Text and Illustrations

This volume contains the complete text of Moses 6:13-8:30 and Genesis 6:14-11:32 — beginning with the genealogical list of Seth and his descendants and continuing through the death of Terah, the father of Abraham. Each of the chapters of commentary is prefaced by an *Overview* section discussing selected themes. A *Text and Commentary* section then follows. In this section, the scriptural text is given at the top of each page, with accompanying commentary below. Bold-formatted words in the scriptural text point the eye to phrases that are the subject of commentary. Next a *Gleanings* section appears, containing extended quotations. *Endnotes* are included at the end of each chapter.

116 Cited in R. G. Moore, *Comparative Look*, pp. 111-112.

117 H. W. Nibley *et al.*, *One Eternal Round*, pp. 18-19.

118 Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 8.

119 Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 9.

120 H. W. Nibley, *Message 2005*.

121 Abraham, Facsimile 2, figure 11.

Following the chapters of commentary, a separate *Excursus* section can be found, containing extended discussions of selected subjects. The *Bibliography* that follows provides descriptions of non-scriptural sources relevant to Enoch and Noah. Throughout the entire book, abbreviated information for each source quoted or consulted appears in the footnotes at the bottom of each page, with additional bibliographic details available in the *References* section. Footnotes also document extensive cross-references to other sections of the book, preceded by an appropriate key word (e.g., COMMENTARY, FIGURE, ENDNOTE, OVERVIEW). For convenience, a set of *Indexes* appear at the end of the book, including a *Thumbnail Index to Figures*.

Significant variants within the original JST manuscripts and the current edition of the Pearl of Great Price are described in the commentary. Although important JST modifications to the KJV text are signaled explicitly in the *Commentary* section, readers must consult their own Bibles for an exhaustive comparison of minor differences among the book of Moses, the JST manuscripts, and the LDS edition of the KJV Bible.

British spellings have been made consistent with American conventions. Transliterations of terms from ancient languages have not been fully standardized but, when referenced by authors, are typically rendered in the same form as they appear in their original publication.

Unlike the book of Abraham, the book of Moses and the early chapters of Genesis did not come to us with illuminating facsimiles. In selecting suitable illustrations to accompany the scriptural commentary, we have relied solely on personal taste and preference with respect to the choice of depictions and their places in the text.

Sources and Citations

To aid the reader's own explorations, we have tried to provide complete documentation for the citations or ideas included in the commentary. Where references to third-party works are embedded within a given citation (e.g., ancient sources referred to by modern authors), we have attempted where possible to check the original sources by autopsy to verify accuracy and appropriateness, and have silently made corrections or updates where we thought it might be necessary or useful. Sometimes we have inserted relevant citations to supporting documents or primary sources when modern authors have not supplied references to clear allusions to scripture or other important sources. In many cases we also have silently modernized or corrected punctuation and capitalization in quotations. Where changes in wording were made or to compensate for gaps due to ellipsis, we have documented the location of changes, expansions, or the insertion of alternate terms by square brackets.

Frequently, we associate multiple citations with the same passage of commentary. This practice is intended to signal consensus and differences of opinion among modern commentators or to indicate concordance and divergence among ancient sources. More rarely, a citation may include references to multiple editions of a given source. It is hoped that these extensive links to pertinent references will encourage readers to check and improve upon our conclusions through their own study.

For the convenience of the reader, we have tried to substitute citations to more recent editions for older or less accessible ones (e.g., James Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* in place of R. H. Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*) and English equivalents for non-English sources (e.g., *Mimekor Yisrael* for *Die Sagen der Juden*, Schaff for Migne). We

have also substituted book of Moses chapter and verse numbers in the place of embedded references to the early chapters of Genesis occurring in works quoted in the text.

Unless otherwise noted, the translations of excerpts from non-English works are those of Bradshaw. Only rarely have we reproduced diacritical marks or vowel pointing in foreign terms that appear in the text.

Where multiple versions or editions of works containing a cited source may make it difficult for the reader to find a reference by page number alone, we have included dates (e.g., for statements of Joseph Smith) or chapter numbers (e.g., transcripts of courses taught by Hugh Nibley, pseudepigraphal or midrashic sources appearing in multiple editions) as part of the citation. In citing the words of Joseph Smith, we have generally used the readily available *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* or *Documentary History of the Church* in preference to primary documents. In some cases, however, we refer directly to manuscript sources when they seem to shed additional light on an interpretation.

We have not explicitly distinguished LDS from non-LDS authors, except concerning materials written by current or former General Authorities of the Church. In the latter case, we have prefaced the name of the author by the ecclesiastical titles they held when the contribution was first made or published (e.g., “Elder,” “President”) — and frequently, in the case of Joseph Smith, the title of “Prophet.”

On the Use of Ancient Texts

Ancient texts from Jewish, Islamic, early Christian, and other sources are quoted widely throughout this book. These present a special problem because in many cases the age and provenance of these writings are uncertain. Moreover, the motivations of the (frequently anonymous) authors and the historical and prophetic bases of their compositions usually remain in doubt. Robinson, for one, has noted the difficulties in distinguishing between inspired literature (i.e., historical or revelatory writings akin to canonical scripture), inspired fiction (i.e., stories designed to teach doctrinal principles such as Elder Boyd K. Packer’s parable *The Mediator*¹²²), and outright “lying for the Lord” (i.e., pseudonymous forgeries that deceitfully present themselves as authoritative to promulgate self-serving interpretations).¹²³ With regard to the last category, R. H. Charles “maintained that the device of [deliberate] pseudonymity was a pious fraud adopted in a time that no longer believed in continuing revelation by authors who nevertheless wished to effect religious changes.”¹²⁴

Further complicating the evaluation of extracanonical texts is the multi-layered nature of the sources from which they were typically composed.¹²⁵ Such writings rarely if ever constitute *de novo* accounts of sacred events. Rather, they tend to incorporate diverse traditions of varying value and antiquity in ways that make difficult the teasing apart of the contribution that each makes to the whole.¹²⁶ As a result, even relatively late documents rife with midrashic speculations unattested elsewhere,¹²⁷ unique Islamic assertions,¹²⁸ or

122 B. K. Packer, *Errand*, pp. 45-47.

123 S. E. Robinson, *Lying*, pp. 134-135.

124 Cited in *ibid.*, p. 142. See *Endnote 0-14*, p. 28.

125 S. K. Brown, Nag Hammadi, p. 257. Wasserstrom aptly describes them as being “eclectically composed, internally differentiated, being comprised of heterogeneous narrative elements” (S. M. Wasserstrom, *Muslim literature*, p. 95).

126 See *Endnote 0-15*, p. 29.

127 See *Endnote 0-16*, p. 29.

128 See *Endnote 0-17*, p. 29.

fantastic Christian interpolations¹²⁹ may sometimes preserve fragments of authentically inspired principles, history, or doctrine,¹³⁰ or may otherwise bear witness of legitimate exegetically derived¹³¹ or ritually transmitted¹³² actualities.

Nor are such truths confined to writings from Abrahamic lands and faiths.¹³³ As the Lord pointedly told Nephi: “I shall also speak unto *all* nations of the earth and they shall write it.”¹³⁴ Considering this fact, it should not be at all surprising if genuinely revealed teachings, promulgated at one time but subsequently lost or distorted,¹³⁵ may sometimes appear to have survived in heterodox strands of religious traditions the world over. Many of these teachings have served, in the words of the First Presidency, to “enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.”¹³⁶ Nor, it seems, could the Lord’s purposes have been achieved in any other way. As Elder Orson F. Whitney once said: “God is using more than one people for the accomplishment of his great and marvelous work. The Latter-day Saints cannot do it all. It is too vast, too arduous, for any one people.”¹³⁷ Thus, we should be acquainted not only with the biblical story of Noah but also with the worldwide literature concerning Flood heroes that go by names such as Nu’u,¹³⁸ Nuh,¹³⁹ Nu Gua,¹⁴⁰ Atrahasis,¹⁴¹ Utnapishtim,¹⁴² Ziusudra,¹⁴³ Deucalion,¹⁴⁴ Yima,¹⁴⁵ and Manu.¹⁴⁶ In addition, we must, as Charlesworth expressed, “be attuned critically to all possible sources of revelation,” including “the word from God that has been heard by the great thinkers, inspired poets, and musicians.”¹⁴⁷

In evaluating evidence of antiquity for works of extracanonical literature, scholars must maintain the careful balance articulated by Nickelsburg:

One should not simply posit what is convenient with the claim that later texts reflected earlier tradition. At the same time, thoroughgoing skepticism is inconsonant with the facts as we know them and as new discoveries continue to reveal them: extant texts represent only a fragment of the written and oral tradition that once existed. Caution, honest scholarly tentativeness, and careful methodology remain the best approach to the data.¹⁴⁸

129 See *Endnote 0-18*, p. 29.

130 The issue of determining ground truth in determining the authenticity of ancient teachings is, of course, a thorny problem of its own. In making such judgments, LDS scholars are fortunate to be able to draw on the additional touchstone of modern revelation.

131 See, e.g., J. L. Kugel, *Instances*, p. 156. Kugel observes: “To make sense of these [brief and sometimes] offhand references—indeed, even to identify them as containing exegetical motifs—it is necessary to read the text in question against the background of the whole body of ancient interpretations” (*ibid.*, p. 156).

132 See, e.g., H. W. Nibley, *Myths*, p. 42.

133 See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, ENDNOTE 0-36, p. 29.

134 2 Nephi 29:12, emphasis mine; cf. Alma 29:8, G. E. Jones, *Apocryphal*, pp. 28-29; cf. B. H. Roberts, *Defense*, 1:512; J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 16 February 1832, pp. 10-11; 22 January 1834, p. 61.

135 See J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, ENDNOTE 0-37, p. 29.

136 S. W. Kimball *et al.*, *God’s Love*, 15 February 1978; S. J. Palmer, *Expanding*, p. v.

137 O. F. Whitney, *Discourse (April 1928)*, p. 59; see also *Respect for diversity of faiths*.

138 E.g., A. Cotterell, *Dictionary*, p. 285.

139 References to Nuh are scattered in dozens of references throughout the *Qur’an* (for a list, see *Islamic View of Noah*). For a summary of the Islamic perspective on Noah, see C. Bakhos, *Genesis, The Qur’an*.

140 E.g., J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 654-657; E. M. Thury *et al.*, Introduction, pp. 116-117, 122-124.

141 E.g., S. Dalley, *Atrahasis*.

142 E.g., A. George, *Gilgamesh*.

143 E.g., T. Jacobsen, *Eridu*.

144 E.g., D. Leeming, *World Mythology*, p. 99, s.v. Deucalion and Pyrrha; Ovid, *Ovid’s Flood Story*; Pseudo-Lucian, *De Dea Syria*, 11-13, pp. 33-34, see also p. 81 n. 98.

145 See J. M. Silverman, *It’s a Craft*.

146 E.g., A. Cotterell, *Dictionary*, pp. 79-80.

147 J. H. Charlesworth, *Protestant View*, p. 84.

148 G. W. E. Nickelsburg, *Judaism*, pp. 25-26. See *Endnote M6-31*, p. 100.

By way of contrast, the comparative approach of Frazer¹⁴⁹ and others of the myth and ritual school of a century ago is largely discounted today,¹⁵⁰ its results compromised due to:¹⁵¹

- (1) the looseness of the equations; (2) the reliance on suggestive and circumstantial detail;
- (3) the tendency to persuade by suggesting a large number of alternatives, all tending in the same direction, as if exhausting the possibilities, and cumulatively overdetermining the desired connection; (4) the disparate quality of the sources of evidence; and (5) the tendency to list all positive examples, but either no or few negative ones

An additional consideration complicating the evaluation of ancient sources is that the line between historical and ritual aspects of some accounts is often purposely blurred for didactic reasons, as we see in the case of LDS temple texts.¹⁵² In such situations, though the accuracy of an ancient account as a historical record or interpretation may be questionable, it may still be of interest because of the way it resonates with authentic doctrinal concepts and revealed ordinances.

Although recognizing the labors of generations of scholars that have begun to reveal the nature and sources of the voluminous canonical and extracanonical literature bearing on the themes of this book, much is still to be learned. In particular, many resemblances among ancient and modern sources have been exposed, it is a more difficult work to transform these parallels into “bridges” demonstrating how related ideas from widely scattered cultures and diverse eras could have been shared and transmitted.¹⁵³ Though the teachings and revelations of Joseph Smith demonstrate to our own satisfaction that archaic concepts and stories can be recovered in exceptional circumstances through divine revelation, the diffusion of ideas by more ordinary means is clearly the rule in history.

Not only will future research continue to shed new light on the meaning of obscure scriptural concepts, no doubt it will also demonstrate that many of our readings have been the result of an inadequate grasp of ancient sources — while, on the other hand, countless illuminating sidelights have been missed entirely.¹⁵⁴ In selecting arguments and sources to be cited in this book, we have usually tried to err on the side of inclusion, thus making these texts more readily available to readers for study, discussion, and comparison of perspectives.¹⁵⁵ This approach has inevitably resulted in a work that resembles more an unevenly sifted and sometimes contradictory scrapbook of ideas and sources than a coherent and inerrant “guide for the perplexed.” In this respect, perhaps, the sole subjective valuation of the worth of the book we are qualified to make is that it tries to be something like what we should have enjoyed ourselves at the beginning of our own study — if only it had it been, in addition, written by authors with better credentials in the relevant fields of scholarship than we can claim. Thus, it is with humble cognizance of such limitations that we proffer our mite of commentary, reflections, source translations, cross-references, footnotes, endnotes, bibliographic annotations, references, and indexes — all of which have been lovingly assembled in the hope of assisting readers with their own explorations of the stories of Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel. Happily, we can be confident that future reflection and dialogue among fellow scripture lovers — augmented and confirmed

149 J. G. Frazer, *Golden Bough*.

150 See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 0-38, p. 30.

151 E. Csapo, *Mythology*, pp. 36-37. See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 0-39, p. 30.

152 J. E. Faulconer, *Incarnation*.

153 Cf. E. R. Goodenough, *Introduction to Philo*, pp. ix-xi.

154 S. E. Robinson, *Lying*, pp. 147-148.

155 See J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, ENDNOTE 0-42, p. 31.

by continuing revelation — will sooner or later identify those instances in which limited knowledge and faulty judgment have led us to misinterpret sources or unwisely position the line of inclusion. In the meantime, as in any such endeavor, the guiding principle in determining the value of the sources and opinions in this book necessarily must be *caveat lector* — let the reader beware!¹⁵⁶

156 D&C 91:4-5; S. K. Brown, Nag Hammadi, pp. 257-258, 267-268.

Endnotes

- 0-1** In Judaism, the term “People of the Book” is typically used to refer to the Jewish people and the canon of written law that is rooted in the *Torah*. Usually, the term also is taken as including the *Mishnah* and the *Talmud* — and sometimes subsequent midrashic texts. People of other Abrahamic religions such as Christianity and Islam are not typically included by Jews in this designation.

Muslims refer to Jews and Christians (along with themselves) as *ahl al-kitab*, meaning roughly “The People of the Book,” thus recognizing these groups as having faith rooted in genuine revelation from God.¹⁵⁷ The “Book” in question is not the *Qurʾan* or any single work of scripture but rather the complete and perfect heavenly archetype from which all authentically revealed texts that have been sent down “gradually” since the time of Adam¹⁵⁸ were originally derived.¹⁵⁹ Though Muslims believe that Jews and Christians have since embraced many errors because of subsequent corruption of their respective books of scripture,¹⁶⁰ their faiths are held in higher esteem than the faiths of those who do not accept Abraham, Moses, or Jesus.¹⁶¹

Ben McGuire rightfully observes that although Mormons “may not be a ‘people of the book’ in the sense of a fixed text with a determinate meaning,” “we see our origins rooted fundamentally in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.”¹⁶²

- 0-2** Madsen further explains:¹⁶³

Mormons seem to be biblicistic and literalistic. But it is the recognition that the Bible is in central parts clear narrative, an account of genuine persons involved in genuine events, that is characteristic ... Creation was an event; the Resurrection occurred. The religious experiences chronicled in the book of Acts are acts in a book. The Bible, the point is, becomes thus a temporal document just as much as it is spiritual. And the same can be said for other Mormon scriptural writings. They too are “time-bound”; they cannot be understood in a non-historical way. They arise from and, it is hoped, return to the concrete realities of the human predicament.

For more about LDS perspectives on the historicity of scripture, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1, EXCURSUS 13: Some Perspectives on Historicity*, pp. 552-553.

- 0-3** The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:¹⁶⁴

Some say that the kingdom of God was not set up on the earth until the day of Pentecost ... but, I say in the name of the Lord, that the kingdom of God was set up on the earth from the days of Adam to the present time. Whenever there has been a righteous man on earth unto whom God revealed His word and gave power and authority to administer in His name, and where there is a priest of God—a minister who has power and authority from God to administer in the ordinances of the gospel and officiate in the priesthood of God, there is the kingdom of God Where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives His oracles, there is the kingdom of God; and where the oracles of God are not, there the kingdom of God is not.

- 0-4** Stephen Whitlock¹⁶⁵ observed that the historical conflation in the term “cleave” of two closely related word forms with nearly opposite meanings (“to divide” and “to unite”¹⁶⁶) is a happenstance that has provided English speakers a useful way to conceive of the ambivalent nature of the human-divine boundary: “the difference between whether a boundary is used to divide or unite ... man and God is completely dependent on the orientation of man,¹⁶⁷ in that returning to God’s presence requires that

157 R. C. Martin, *Encyclopedia*, 1:27-29.

158 A. a.-S. M. H. at-Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan*, 5:8-9. Cf. *Qurʾan* 25:32.

159 *Ibid.*, 5:79-80; J. Wansbrough, *Qurʾanic Studies*, pp. 83, 170; B. M. Wheeler, *Prophets*, pp. 3-4; *Qurʾan* 3:315-136, 85:21-22.

160 A. a.-S. M. H. at-Tabataba’i, *Al-Mizan*, 3:79-80, 5:10-11, 6:184-219; T. Khalidi, *Muslim Jesus*, p. 20.

161 See *Qurʾan* 2:105; Z. Karabell, *Peace*, pp. 19-20; D. C. Peterson, *Muhammad (2001)*, pp. 590-591.

162 B. McGuire, 22 July 2013.

163 T. G. Madsen, *Essay*, p. xv.

164 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 22 January 1843, pp. 21-22.

165 S. T. Whitlock, August 16 2012.

166 See discussion of the confusion in D. Harper, *Dictionary*, cleave (1), cleave (2); J. A. Simpson *et al.*, *OED*, s.v. cleave (2), 305, p. 267.

167 See, e.g., D&C 52:5-6, 93:1.

we be like Him.¹⁶⁸ To the extent that we are not like God we are separated,¹⁶⁹ and the separation is for our benefit (not God's) because it gives us 'space' to repent."¹⁷⁰

For a discussion of how the theme of the "two ways" structures chapters 5-8 of the book of Moses, see J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, pp. 342-351.

- 0-5 Sailhamer has commented on the relationship between the accounts of the Creation, the covenant at Mount Sinai, and the Flood as follows:¹⁷¹

One of the clearest indications [that the Creation account of Genesis 1 has been composed to foreshadow the giving of the covenant at Mount Sinai] is the pattern of "ten words." Just as the whole of the covenant could be stated in "ten words,"¹⁷² so the whole of the universe could be created in "ten words."¹⁷³ The same pattern lies behind the account of the Flood. Through the whole of the account there is the same tenfold repetition of "and God/the Lord said"¹⁷⁴... Such patterns are a part of the whole of the compositional scheme of the book. Within the structure of Genesis, the number ten is unusually dominant, e.g., ten individuals in the lists of names in chapter 5 and chapter 11, and the tenfold reiteration of the promised blessing throughout the book.

- 0-6 While not intending to affirm the validity of all the specific results of Kohav's dissertation research, we note his interesting hypothesis that the compilers of the Hexateuch deliberately coded their primary message in a way that would be deliberately misunderstood by readers unfamiliar with their methods and intentions relating to the preservation of the "First Temple priestly initiation tradition":¹⁷⁵

The thesis foregrounds a "second-channel" esoteric narrative from within the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua [that was] a successful if drastic priestly means of preserving the secrecy and ultimate survival of their respective esoteric and initiatory doctrines and methods.

Kohav concludes that the purpose of the First Temple initiation tradition described in the Hexateuch was to facilitate a direct encounter with YHWH.¹⁷⁶ In a similar but not identical vein derived from his study of the "mysteries" of the First Temple, William J. Hamblin concluded: "The fundamental purpose of the Israelite Temple was not to offer sacrifice; it was to bring Israel back into the presence of God."¹⁷⁷ See also M. Barker, *Restoring*.

- 0-7 J. David Pleins criticizes what he calls "loose literalism" for the way it allows the historical and the archaeological to push aside the value of what the scripture actually says:¹⁷⁸

The trouble with loose literalism is that what tends to capture our attention is the clever explanation rather than the story itself. We quickly move on from the Flood story ... to the seemingly more interesting archaeological problems that stand back of the Bible.

We catch Ryan and Pitman falling into this trap in a section of [their book on Noah's Flood] that extols the virtue and power of ancient myth:

For a myth to survive unscathed from repeated recitation, it needs a powerful story Oral tradition tells such stories. But so does the decipherment by the natural scientist who works from a text recorded in layers of mud, sand, and gravel from the bottom of lakes and seas using all the tools and principles of physics, chemistry, and biology. The scientific plot can then be given richer detail and new themes from the supporting contributions of the archaeologist, the linguist, and the geneticist.

168 See, e.g., Leviticus 19:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:13; 1 John 3:2; 3 Nephi 27:27; D&C 88:40, 107; J. M. Bradshaw, *God's Image 1*, p. 77 n. 1-14.

169 See, e.g., D&C 1:14, 50:8, 56:3, 63:63, 64:35, 85:11, 101:90, 133:63.

170 See Alma 12:24.

171 J. H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, p. 94 n. 8:20-9:17.

172 I.e., the Ten Commandments—see Exodus 34:28.

173 I.e., "And God said" occurs ten times in Genesis 1: vv. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29.

174 Genesis 6:7a, 6:13a, 7:1a, 8:15 (twice), 8:21a, 9:1a, 9:8a, 9:12a, 9:17.

175 A. S. Kohav, *Sôd Hypothesis*, back cover.

176 See, e.g., the summary of the conclusions of Kohav's study in *ibid.*, p. 274.

177 W. J. Hamblin, *Mysteries of Solomon's Temple*.

178 J. D. Pleins, *When*, p. 18.

Figures such as Noah and the Mesopotamian survivor of the Flood, Utnapishtim, are thus relegated to the supporting cast in a grander scientific drama that has as its dramatis personae scores of dislocated village dwellers put on the move by a Neolithic conflagration.

- 0-8 That much of the shaping of Genesis to highlight the interconnections with subsequent biblical stories was done, as seems likely, by authors who lived after the time of Moses should not be a foreign concept to readers of the Book of Mormon, who are familiar with the history of how its inspired editors wove separate overlapping records from earlier times into the finished scriptural narrative. The authors and editors of the Book of Mormon knew that the account was not preserved primarily for the people of their own times, but rather for later generations.¹⁷⁹ More specifically, President Ezra Taft Benson testified: “It was meant for us. Mormon wrote near the end of the Nephite civilization. Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, he abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us.”¹⁸⁰

Neither should the idea be disturbing to modern readers that the story of the Flood, as we have it today, might “be read as a kind of parable”¹⁸¹ — its account of the historical events shaped with specific pedagogical purposes in mind. “If this is so,” writes Blenkinsopp, “it would be only one of several examples in *P* [one of the presumed redactors of the Genesis account] of a paradigmatic interpretation of events recorded in the earlier sources with reference to the contemporary situation.”¹⁸² More simply put, Nephi himself openly declared: “I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.”¹⁸³ Indeed, Nephi left us with significant examples where he deliberately shaped his explanation of Bible stories and teachings in order to help his hearers understand how they applied to their own situations.¹⁸⁴

“[A]ny conceptual framework which merely purports to reconstruct events ‘as they really were’ (Ranke),” writes Michael Fishbane, “is historicistic, and ignores the thrust of [the Bible’s] reality. For the Bible is more than history. It is a religious document which has transformed memories and records in accordance with various theological concerns.”¹⁸⁵ André LaCocque describes how the Bible “attributes to historical events (like the Exodus, for instance) a paradigmatic quality.”¹⁸⁶

- 0-9 Yair Zakovitch¹⁸⁷ describes the Bible as “a branching network of relationships that connect distant texts, binding them to one another. Writings from different historical periods and a variety of literary genres call out and interpret one another, with the interpreted texts being reflected back — somewhat altered — from a multitude of mirrors. Poets interpret stories, storytellers interpret poetry, and prophets interpret the Pentateuch. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration when I propose that no literary unit in the Bible stands alone, isolated and independent, with no other text drawing from its reservoir and casting it in a new light.”

As in Phillip Michael Sherman’s¹⁸⁸ insightful intertextual analysis of Genesis 11, we will not be mainly concerned in this commentary “with *direction of influence*; rather [our] interest is in the type of influence other biblical texts (whatever the chronological or canonical relationship . . .) exert on the interpretation” of the narratives of exegetical focus. Scripture readers encounter these narratives “in the midst of a whole host of other [scriptural] narratives, all of which (or none of which) could serve as potential inter-texts for reading [the stories of Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel].” Rabbinical readers recognized this way of understanding the Hebrew Bible when they wrote: “There is no before or after in the *Torah*.”¹⁸⁹ Compare the point of view of literary theorists such as Terry Eagleton:¹⁹⁰

The literary work itself exists merely as . . . a set of “schemata” or general directions, which the reader must actualize. As the reading process proceeds, however, these expectations will

179 E.g., 2 Nephi 25:31; Jacob 1:3; Enos 1:15-16; Jarom 1:2; Mormon 7:1, 8:34-35.

180 E. T. Benson, *Book of Mormon—Keystone*, November 1986.

181 J. Blenkinsopp, *The structure of P*, p. 284.

182 *Ibid.*, p. 284.

183 1 Nephi 19:23.

184 E.g., 1 Nephi 4:2, 17:23-44.

185 M. A. Fishbane, *Sacred Center*, p. 6.

186 A. LaCocque, *Captivity*, p. 71.

187 Y. Zakovitch, *Inner-Biblical*, p. 95.

188 P. M. Sherman, *Babel’s Tower*, p. 45.

189 Cited in *ibid.*, p. 43. From *Talmud of Jerusalem Megillah* 1:5; *Babylonian Talmud Pesachim* 6b (with reference to when the Passover should be celebrated).

190 T. Eagleton, *Literary Theory*, p. 67.

themselves be modified by what we learn, and the hermeneutical circle — moving from part to whole and back to part — will begin to revolve ... What we have learned on page one will fade and become “foreshortened” in memory, perhaps to be radically qualified by what we learn later. Reading is never a straightforward linear movement, a merely cumulative affair; our initial speculations generate a frame of reference within which to interpret what comes next, but what comes next may retrospectively transform our original understanding, highlighting some features of it and backgrounding others. As we read on we shed assumptions, revise beliefs, make more and more complex inferences and anticipations; each sentence opens up a horizon which is confirmed, challenged, or undermined by the next. We read backwards and forwards simultaneously, predicting and recollecting, perhaps aware of other possible realizations of the text which our reading has negated. Moreover, all of this complicated activity is carried out on many levels at once, for the text has “backgrounds” and “foregrounds,” different narrative viewpoints, alternative layers of meaning between which we are constantly moving.

Of course, the process of “sensemaking”¹⁹¹ is not confined to reading, but is pervasive in any human activities intent on understanding complex phenomena.¹⁹²

- 0-10** Although broad agreement persists on many issues of longstanding consensus, the state of research on the composition of the Pentateuch continues to evolve in important ways. In 2012, Konrad Schmid gave the following assessment:¹⁹³

Pentateuchal scholarship has changed dramatically in the last three decades, at least when seen in a global perspective. The confidence of earlier assumptions about the formation of the Pentateuch no longer exists, a situation that might be lamented but that also opens up new and — at least in the view of some scholars — potentially more adequate paths to understand its composition. One of the main results of the new situation is that neither traditional nor newer theories can be taken as the accepted starting point of analysis; rather, they are, at most possible ends.

With respect to Genesis in particular, “it is fairly obvious that the book of Genesis serves as a kind of introduction or prologue to what follows in Exodus through Deuteronomy.”¹⁹⁴ “Nevertheless,” continues Schmid in his highlighting of one prominent theme in the most recent thinking on the topic,¹⁹⁵ “the function of Genesis to the Pentateuch is apparently not exhausted by describing it as an introduction to the Moses story Genesis ... shows ... clear signs of having existed as a stand-alone literary unit for some portion of its literary growth. Genesis is a special book within the Pentateuch: it is the most self-sufficient one In current scholarship, it is no longer possible to explain the composition of the book of Genesis from the outset within the framework of the Documentary Hypothesis.” For a broader survey of current research, see Gertz.¹⁹⁶ For details of textual transmission and reception history of Genesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, see Evans *et al.*¹⁹⁷

- 0-11** This is consistent with George Q. Cannon’s statement about the Prophet’s intentions to “seal up” the work for “a later day” after he completed the main work of Bible translation on 2 February 1833.¹⁹⁸

No endeavor was made at that time to print the work. It was sealed up with the expectation that it would be brought forth at a later day with other of the scriptures¹⁹⁹ ... [T]he labor was its own reward, bringing in the performance a special blessing of broadened comprehension to the Prophet and a general blessing of enlightenment to the people through his subsequent teachings.

Bradshaw has elsewhere argued the likelihood that the focus of the divine tutorial that took place during Joseph Smith’s Bible translation effort was on temple and priesthood matters — hence the restriction on general dissemination of these teachings during the Prophet’s early ministry.²⁰⁰

- 0-12** Perhaps the most striking example is found in citations of Malachi 4:5-6, a key prophecy relating to the restoration of the priesthood:

191 G. Klein *et al.*, *Making Sense 1*; G. Klein *et al.*, *Making Sense 2*.

192 E.g., J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *Coactive Emergence*; J. M. Bradshaw *et al.*, *Sol*.

193 K. Schmid, *Genesis*, pp. 28-29.

194 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

195 *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 32, 45.

196 J. C. Gertz, *Formation*.

197 C. A. Evans *et al.*, *Book of Genesis*, pp. 303-632.

198 G. Q. Cannon, *Life (1907)*, p. 129.

199 See D&C 42:56-58.

200 J. M. Bradshaw, *God’s Image 1*, pp. 3-6; J. M. Bradshaw, *Moses Temple Themes*, pp. 13-16.

Malachi 4:5-6 (cf. Luke 1:17; 3 Nephi 25:6; D&C 27:9; 110:15; 128:17. See also J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 2 July 1839, p. 160, 20 January 1844, p. 330, 10 March 1844, p. 337, 7 April 1844, p. 356): 5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Joseph Smith-History 1:38-39 (1838; J. Smith, Jr. *et al.*, *Histories*, 1832-1844, History Drafts 2 and 3, pp. 224-225; J. Smith, Jr., *Documentary History*, 1:12): 38 ... Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. 39 ... And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming.

J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 27 August 1843, p. 323: Elijah shall reveal the covenants to seal the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers.

Ibid., 20 January 1844, p. 330: Now, the word “turn” here should be translated “bind,” or “seal.”

Ibid., 10 March 1844, p. 337: He should send Elijah to seal the children to the fathers, and the fathers to the children.

For a discussion of the idea of “sealing” children and fathers and the power of Elijah, see J. M. Bradshaw, *Temple Themes in the Oath*, pp. 45-51.

- 0-13** For example, 4 Ezra records that the Lord commanded Moses to reveal openly only part of his visions on Mt. Sinai; the rest was to be kept secret. Similarly, Ezra is reported to have been told that certain books were to be read by the “worthy and unworthy” whereas others were to be given only “to the wise.”²⁰¹
- 0-14** According to Robinson, the apocryphal literature “was employed in basically four ways: to fill in the gaps in the scriptural account, to attack opposing theologies, to defend against the attacks of others, and to bring about or to legitimize theological change.”²⁰² With respect to scriptural gap-filling, he writes:

It was noticed anciently that the scriptural narrative often omitted information it might have been nice to have. Moreover, these omissions were often the occasion for questions and doubts about the reliability of the scriptures. For example, where did Cain get his wife, and just which fruit was the forbidden one? Did Adam and Eve ever repent? (Genesis doesn't actually say so.) But if we turn to the *Testament of Adam* we learn that Cain married his sister Labuda, who incidentally was the real cause of the fight between Cain and Abel, and that the forbidden fruit was the fig. And if we have any doubts about the repentance of Adam and Eve, we can read all about it in the *Vita Adae et Evae*, in the *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan*, or in the *Penitence of Adam*. The *Book of Enoch* explains what Genesis (6:1-4) meant by the “sons of God” going in unto the “daughters of men,” and the *Genesis Apocryphon* from Qumran can give us the details about the birth of Noah, or about Abraham and Sarah in Egypt. In fact, for the pseudepigrapher every question can have an answer.²⁰³

Our frequently unhealthy compulsion to fill in gaps in scripture stories and doctrinal understanding continues in modern times. The tendency is illustrated in a story recounted by Krister Stendahl: “You may have heard about the preacher who preached about the gnashing of teeth in hell. And one of the parishioners said, ‘But what about us who have lost our teeth?’ And the preacher answered, ‘Teeth will be provided.’”²⁰⁴

Complicating the task for the researcher, however, is increasing evidence that what have been seen in the past as “gap-filling” elaborations in ancient narratives sometimes may be, in point of fact, authentic ancient material. Explains Reeves:

Under the old scheme of analyzing “gaps” in biblical narrative, one almost invariably viewed so-called “expansions” or “embellishments” gap-fillers, if you will—such as are found in rabbinic

201 B. M. Metzger, *Fourth Ezra*, 14:6, 45-47, pp. 553, 555. Rabbinical arguments to this effect are summarized in A. J. Heschel, *Heavenly Torah*, pp. 656-657. See also H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, 18, pp. 223-224. For examples of other scriptural passages that speak of restrictions on making revelations known, see 2 Corinthians 12:4; 3 Nephi 17:16-17; 28:13-16; Ether 3:21-4:7.

202 S. E. Robinson, *Lying*, p. 143.

203 *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

204 K. Stendahl, *Third Nephi*, p. 152.

Midrash or the works belonging to the genre of “rewritten Bible” as post-textual responses to the interpretive problems posed by puzzling features of the biblical text. Under the new perspective I am advocating, we are no longer obligated to view these “gap-fillers” as interpretive responses to a base text. We can instead entertain the distinct possibility that Midrash, “rewritten Bible,” and biblically-allied collections of traditions may preserve certain features or motifs or even in some cases provide more cohesive and thematically consistent presentations of stories than those eventually attested in what became the Bible.²⁰⁵

As an endorsement of this interpretive position, Reeves further cites Talmon, who argued that:

“The new evidence proves convincingly that not all variants in Hebrew non-masoretic and translational witnesses resulted from scribal mistakes or the deliberate interference of emendators, revisers and copyists. Rather, variants in an ancient version preserve at times pristine readings which were accidentally lost in the course of time or were designedly suppressed by later tradents.²⁰⁶ Accordingly, in tracing the transmission history of the biblical books and submitting them to critical analysis, the evidence of the ancient versions must be carefully weighed.” He states further: “... it is my thesis that the presumably ‘re-told,’ re-read,’ ‘re-written,’ etc. Bible-related works should mostly be viewed as crystallizations of ‘living’ literary traditions, which parallel presentations of these same traditions in the books of the Hebrew Bible, but do not necessarily spring from them.”²⁰⁷

- 0-15** For a discussion of the difficulties in teasing out Jewish from Christian contributions to the pseudepigrapha, see Kraft.²⁰⁸
- 0-16** For example, Schwartz asserts that “a great many rabbinic myths, as found in the Midrashim, are not new creations of the rabbis, as might appear to be the case. Rather they are simply the writing down of an oral tradition that was kept alive by the people, when there was no need to suppress it any longer.”²⁰⁹ Moreover, he points out that “the rabbinic texts themselves claim that these traditions are part of the Oral *Torah*, handed down by God to Moses at Mount Sinai, and are therefore considerably ancient.”²¹⁰
- 0-17** For example, Reeves has concluded “that the *Qurʾān*, along with the interpretive traditions available in *Hadith*, commentaries, antiquarian histories, and the collections of so-called ‘prophetic legends’ (*qiṣṣat al-anbiyaʾ*), can shed a startling light on the structure and content of certain stories found in Bible and its associated literatures (such as Pseudepigrapha and Midrash). [Thus, the] *Qurʾān* and other early Muslim biblically-allied traditions must be taken much more seriously as witnesses to ‘versions of Bible’ than has heretofore been the case.”²¹¹ Wasserstrom refers to “arguments to the effect that active reading of ‘biblical’ or ‘extrabiblical’ narratives by Muslims was an exercise which reflexively illuminates those ‘original’ sources” and cites Halperin’s argument that transmitters of these stories in the Islamic tradition “tended to make manifest what had been typically left latent in the Jewish version which they had received.”²¹² For a discussion of the complex two-way relationship between Jewish pseudepigrapha and Muslim literature, see Wasserstrom.²¹³ For a specific discussion of Islamic sources and interpretation in Genesis, see Bakhos.²¹⁴
- 0-18** For example, as Lipscomb observes, even some of the late medieval compositions that “do not derive directly from earliest Christianity” may be of “great importance... in the antiquity of some of the traditions they contain, the uniqueness of some of their larger contribution to the development and understanding of Adam materials and of medieval Christianity.”²¹⁵

205 J. C. Reeves, *Flowing Stream*.

206 I.e., bearers of the tradition to the next generation.

207 See Talmon’s “Textual Criticism: The Ancient Versions,” in *Text in Context: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Study* [ed. A. D. H. Mayes; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000] 141-70, at pp. 149-50 and 157 respectively. Cited in J. C. Reeves, *Flowing Stream*.

208 R. A. Kraft, *Pseudepigrapha*.

209 H. Schwartz, *Tree*, p. lxiv.

210 *Ibid.*, p. lxxxiv. See also E. J. Brandt, *Jasher*, pp. 305-306.

211 J. C. Reeves, *Flowing Stream*; see also T. Khalidi, *Muslim Jesus*, pp. 7-9, 16-17.

212 Cited in S. M. Wasserstrom, *Muslim Literature*, p. 100.

213 *Ibid.*

214 C. Bakhos, *Genesis, the Qurʾān*.

215 W. L. Lipscomb, *Armenian*, pp. 1-6.

- 0-19 President Brigham Young insightfully commented on this topic as follows:²¹⁶

It was remarked this morning that the Book of Mormon in no case contradicts the Bible. It has many words like those in the Bible, and as a whole is a strong witness to the Bible. Revelations, when they have passed from God to man, and from man into his written and printed language, cannot be said to be entirely perfect, though they may be as perfect as possible under the circumstances; they are perfect enough to answer the purposes of Heaven at this time

When God speaks to the people, he does it in a manner to suit their circumstances and capacities. He spoke to the children of Jacob through Moses, as a blind, stiff-necked people, and when Jesus and his Apostles came they talked with the Jews as a benighted, wicked, selfish people. They would not receive the Gospel, though presented to them by the Son of God in all its righteousness, beauty and glory. Should the Lord Almighty send an angel to re-write the Bible, it would in many places be very different from what it now is. And I will even venture to say that if the Book of Mormon were now to be re-written, in many instances it would materially differ from the present translation. According as people are willing to receive the things of God, so the heavens send forth their blessings. If the people are stiff-necked, the Lord can tell them but little.

- 0-20 In this vein, J. David Pleins describes a study published by the *Institute for Creation Research*:²¹⁷

Exact literalists will doubtless endorse the seemingly precise mathematical calculations of J. Woodmorape's *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, whose Ark carries 15,754 animals that require a total of 2,500 tons of dried food (less if hibernating) and produce 12 tons of "excreta" daily, not to mention giving off 241 tons of biomass heat at a ventilation clearing rate of 210,000 cubic meters per hour (thus coping with "explosive manure gases").

- 0-21 A thumbnail characterization of the modernism controversy is given by Faulconer:²¹⁸

One writer has described modernism's assumption this way: "A constellation of positions (e.g., a rational demand for unity, certainty, universality, and ultimacy) and beliefs (e.g., the belief that words, ideas, and things are distinct entities; the belief that the world represents a fixed object of analysis separated from forms of human discourse and cognitive representation; the belief that culture is subsequent to nature and that society is subsequent to the individual)."²¹⁹ There is far too little room here to discuss the point extensively, but suffice it to say that, first, few, if any, of these assumptions have remained standing in the twentieth century, and second, the failure of these assumptions does not necessarily imply the failure of their claims to truth or knowledge, as is often argued, sometimes by adherents to the current attack on modernism and sometimes by critics of that attack. For an excellent discussion of postmodernism and its relation to religion, see John Caputo.²²⁰

- 0-22 Brant Gardner wisely summarizes:²²¹ "The Book of Mormon was translated by a very human Joseph Smith. Nevertheless, he was a human being inspired to extrahuman ability through divine providence. Joseph declined to say more about the translation of the Book of Mormon than to declare that it was accomplished through 'the gift and power of God.' No matter how closely we examine the process, no matter how well we might understand the human aspect, Joseph's description really remains the best."

- 0-23 The importance of discerning authentic patterns in the pieces is discussed by Georges Florovsky:²²²

Denouncing the Gnostic mishandling of Scriptures, St. Irenaeus introduced a picturesque simile. A skillful artist has made a beautiful image of a king, composed of many precious jewels. Now, another man takes this mosaic image apart, re-arranges the stones in another pattern so as to produce the image of a dog or of a fox. Then he starts claiming that this was the original picture, by the first master, under the pretext that the gems (the *pséphides*) were authentic. In fact, however, the original design had been destroyed — *lysas tèn hypokeimenèn tou anthrôpou idean*. This is precisely what the heretics do with the Scripture. They disregard and disrupt "the order and connection" of the Holy Writ and "dismember the truth" — *lyontes ta melê tês alêtheias*. Words, expressions, and images — *hrêmata, lexeis, parabolai* — are genuine, indeed, but the design, the hypothesis,

216 B. Young, 13 July 1862, pp. 310, 312. Thanks to Ben McGuire for pointing out this quotation.

217 J. D. Pleins, *When*, p. 16.

218 J. E. Faulconer, *Study*, pp. 131-132.

219 S. Daniel, *Paramodern Strategies*, pp. 42-43.

220 J. Caputo, *Good News*.

221 B. A. Gardner, *Gift and Power*, p. 321.

222 G. Florovsky, *Bible*, pp. 77-78.

is arbitrary and false (Adv. Haeres., 1. 8. 1). St. Irenaeus suggested as well another analogy. There were in circulation at that time certain *Homero-centones*, composed of genuine verses of Homer, but taken at random and out of context, and re-arranged in arbitrary manner. All particular verses were truly Homeric, but the new story, fabricated by the means of re-arrangement, was not Homeric at all. Yet, one could be easily deceived by the familiar sound of the Homeric idiom (1.9.4). It is worth noticing that Tertullian also refers to these curious *centones*, made of Homeric or Virgilian verses (De Praescr., XXXIX). Apparently, it was a common device in the polemical literature of that time. Now, the point which St. Irenaeus endeavored to make is obvious. Scripture had its own pattern or design, its internal structure and harmony. The heretics ignore this pattern, or rather substitute their own instead. In other words, they re-arrange the Scriptural evidence on a pattern which is quite alien to the Scripture itself. Now, contended St. Irenaeus, those who had kept unbending that “canon of truth” which they had received at baptism, will have no difficulty in “restoring each expression to its appropriate place.” Then they are able to behold the true image. The actual phrase used by St. Irenaeus is peculiar: *prosarmosas tōi tēs alētheias sōmatiōi* (which is clumsily rendered in the old Latin translation as *corpusculum veritatis*). But the meaning of the phrase is quite clear. The *somation* is not necessarily a diminutive. It simply denotes a “corporate body.” In the phrase of St. Irenaeus it denotes the *corpus* of truth, the right context, the original design, the “true image,” the original disposition of gems and verses.

- 0-24 The implication of scripture, however, is that learning spiritual matters from book study is a poor cousin to learning by faith — i.e., study “out of the best books” is only necessary because “all have not faith.” Though himself a great advocate of schools for the teaching of practical subjects in Kirtland and Nauvoo, on the matters of learning for the eternities Joseph Smith wanted the Saints to gain knowledge by direct revelation — to throw away their crutches, take up their beds, and walk: “The best way²²³ to obtain truth and wisdom is not to ask it from books, but to go to God in prayer, and obtain divine teaching.”²²⁴

223 The source for this quote reads “the *only* way” (J. Smith, Jr., *Words*, 3 October 1841, p. 77, emphasis added).

224 J. Smith, Jr., *Teachings*, 3 October 1841, p. 191.