

Book of Moses Essay #10: Enoch's Preaching Mission — Enoch Reads from a Book of Remembrance (Moses 6:46–47)

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Thanks to John LeBlanc

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IF YOU CAN'T PROPHECY ANYTHING NICE,
DON'T PROPHECY ANYTHING AT ALL

Prophecy nice.^[1]

All Men Were Offended Because of Enoch (Moses 6:37)

As was described in a previous *Essay*,^[2] Moses 6–7 depicts scenes of wars, bloodshed, and slaughter among the people to which Enoch was commanded to preach.^[3] The Qumran *Book of Giants* account likewise begins with references to “slaughter, destruction, and moral corruption”^[4] that filled the earth.^[5] In view of the depth of the wickedness of the people, it was impossible for Enoch to “prophecy nice” so as to please the people. Hugh Nibley describes the situation as follows:^[6]

[Enoch] goes out and preaches, and all men are offended because he doesn't bring good news. Remember what the people say to Samuel the Lamanite, "Tell us what's right with Zarahemla; don't tell us what's wrong with Zarahemla." Samuel the Lamanite said, "When a person comes and tells you how wonderful you are, you clothe him in fine apparel; you carry him on your shoulders and say he is a true prophet. If he tells you your sins, you immediately cry out, kill him; he's a false prophet."^[7] This is the situation here. Nobody likes [Enoch] at all. Notice: "... standing upon the hills and the high places, and cried with a loud voice, testifying against their works; and all men were offended because of him."^[8] Nobody liked his very negative record. Why? Because he testified against their works. ... And so they tried to pass him off as a nut.^[9]

As with Alma and Amulek, who the Lord did not suffer to "stretch forth [their] hands, and exercise the power of God which [was] in [them],"^[10] Enoch was initially constrained from physical action, relying solely on the "power of the language which God had given him."^[11] But then, as now, their deeds were recorded both on earth and in heaven "that the judgments which [God] shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day."^[12]

Heavenly Books in Ancient Tradition

Consistent with the Book of Moses account that describes the book of Adam as being handed down to Enoch, the *Zohar* teaches that Enoch had a copy of the "book of the generations of Adam" from the same heavenly source that revealed it to Adam.^[13] Hugh Nibley gives a more specific description of how the pattern of sacred books functions in the stories and teachings of Latter-day Saint scripture.^[14]

It all begins on earth with the "book of the Generations of Adam,"^[15] a complete record of names and events and of God's dealing with his children on earth. He requires the Saints in every age to keep such a book, or rather to continue the original, adding their own names and histories to it, as they "arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God,"^[16] which is the same as the "book of remembrance,"^[17] which goes back to Adam^[18] and is also "the genealogy of the sons of Adam."^[19] Enoch reads from the books to remind his people of "the commandments, which I [God] gave unto their father, Adam,"^[20] when he "called upon our father Adam by his own voice,"^[21] and ordered them to pass it on: "Teach these things freely unto your children,"^[22] and in time they are to reach us!^[23] The rule is that "many books ... of every kind" are "handed down from one generation to another ... even until they [the people] have fallen into transgression,"^[24] at which time they disappear until another prophet brings them forth.

In Jewish tradition, several types of "heavenly books" are distinguished:^[25]

- The *Book of Life*, in which the names of the righteous are written. In some accounts, there is a corresponding *Book of Death* in which the names of the wicked are recorded. This book is “by far the most common” type of heavenly book mentioned and references to it are found both in the Old and New Testaments.
- The *Book of Fate* “records what will happen in advance, either to an individual or to a larger community.” It appears “only rarely in the Hebrew scriptures but much more frequently in the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Second Temple literature, and especially in *Jubilees*.”
- The *Book of Deeds*, a “heavenly accounting of people’s works, good or evil,” which “regulates entrance into eternal happiness.” Like the *Book of Fate*, this type of heavenly book predominates in Isaiah, Daniel, and in the pseudepigrapha.

Enoch’s Book of Remembrance as a “Book of Deeds”

The heavenly book referred to in the Book of Moses, as in related Jewish pseudepigrapha, resembles most closely a *Book of Deeds*. In Moses 6, we read of Enoch’s preaching to the people out of this “book of remembrance,”^[26] in which both the words of God and the deeds of the people were recorded. Correspondingly, in the *Book of Giants*, a book in the form of “two stone tablets”^[27] is given by Enoch to Mahujah to stand as a witness of “their fallen state and betrayal of their ancient covenants.”^[28] In *Pseudo-Jubilees*, another fragmentary book found at Qumran, it is written that:^[29]

1. [... E]noch after we taught him ...
3. [... the ea]rth among the sons of mankind. And he testified against all of them.
4. [...] and also against the Watchers ...

In the Book of Moses, Enoch says the heavenly book was written “according to the pattern given by the finger of God.”^[30] This may allude to the idea that a similar record of the wickedness of the people was being kept in heaven,^[31] as attested in *1 Enoch*:^[32]

Do not suppose to yourself nor say in your heart that they do not know nor are your unrighteous deeds seen in heaven, nor are they written down before the Most High. Henceforth know that all your unrighteous deeds are written down day by day, until the day of your judgment.

As Enoch is depicted as an author of the book of remembrance in Moses 6, so he is described in the *Testament of Abraham* as the heavenly being who is responsible for recording the deeds of mankind so that they can be brought into remembrance.^[33] Likewise, in *Jubilees* 10:17 we read:^[34] “Enoch had been created as a witness to the generations of the world so that he might report every deed of each generation in the day of judgment.” Thus, Enoch as a scribe and witness of the heavenly book of remembrance, as described in the Book of Moses, fits squarely into ancient Jewish teachings about Enoch.

This article was adapted and expanded from Bradshaw, Jeffrey M., and David J. Larsen. *Enoch, Noah, and the Tower of Babel*. In *God's Image and Likeness 2*. Salt Lake City, UT: The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2014, pp. 46–47.

Further Reading

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Endnotes

[1] Found at <https://latterdaysaintmag.com/article-1-11613/> (accessed February 14, 2020).

[2] See *Essay #9*.

[3] See Moses 6:15; 7:7, 16.

[4] J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, p. 67.

[5] M. Wise *et al.*, DSS, Book of Giants (1Q23), 9+14+15:2-4, p. 291; F. G. Martinez, Book of Giants (1Q23), 9+14+15:2-4.

[6] H. W. Nibley, *Teachings of the PGP*, p. 275.

[7] See Helaman 13:26–28.

[8] Moses 6:37.

[9] See Moses 6:38: “a strange thing in the land; a wild man hath come among us.” For more on this theme, see *Essay #6*.

[10] Alma 14:10.

[11] Moses 7:13.

[12] Alma 14:11.

[13] *Zohar* 1:37b (ed. Vilna) as cited in J. C. Reeves *et al.*, *Enoch from Antiquity* 1, p. 87: “They brought down to Adam the protoplast (from heaven) an actual book. ... Enoch also had a book and that book was from the (same) place as the ‘book of the generations of Adam’ (Genesis 5:1).” Cf. D. C. Matt, *Zohar* 1, Be-Reshit 1:37b, pp. 237–238.

The book of remembrance mentioned in the Book of Moses seems to have been passed down to the righteous descendants of Adam. For example, Moses 6:3–5 prefaces its description of the keeping of “a book of remembrance ... in the language of Adam” with a mention of the births of Seth and Enos, who called “upon the name of the Lord” and “it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration.” This passage recalls a fragmentary text from Qumran that has been given the title “The Secret of the Way Things Are” (4Q415-418, 1Q26, 4Q423). It likewise preserves a tradition that a “book of remembrance” was successively bequeathed to Seth and Enos “with a spiritual people” (M. Wise *et al.*, DSS, 4Q417 Fragment 1, column 1, lines 13–17, p. 484). Though Jewish pseudepigrapha, Josephus, and Christian gnostic writings all mention Seth in connection with this tradition, it is rarer to find it associated with both Seth and Enosh. Thanks to David Snell for pointing out this reference.

[14] H. W. Nibley, *Enoch*, p. 133.

[15] Moses 6:8.

[16] D&C 85:7.

[17] D&C 85:9.

[18] Moses 6:45–46.

[19] Moses 6:22.

[20] Moses 6:28.

- [21] Moses 6:51.
- [22] Moses 6:58.
- [23] D&C 107:56.
- [24] Helaman 3:15–16.
- [25] L. Baynes, *Heavenly Book*, pp. 7–8.
- [26] Moses 6:46. Cf. Moses 6:5.
- [27] Sundermann Fragment L I Recto 1-9, in J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, p. 109. See also p. 110 n. 6 and p. 154 n. 306. Cf. 4Q203 Fragments 7b 1-3, column ii and 8 1-12, in D. W. Parry *et al.*, *DSSR* (2013), p. 945. J. T. Milik *et al.*, *Enoch*, p. 335 cites a fragment of the Middle Persian *Kawân* and a small fragment from Qumran (2Q26) for more detail about the tablets. The first tablet, made of wood, is washed by the wicked in order to efface its writing. It “symbolizes the generation of the Flood” who will be “submerged by the waters of the Flood ... The tablet of line 3 seems to be a second or third one, since it is the ‘board’ of salvation, the ark of Noah and his three sons.”
- [28] H. W. Nibley, *Enoch*, p. 214. See F. G. Martinez, *Book of Giants* (4Q203), 8:1–11, p. 260–261.
- [29] 4Q227 (4QpsJubc?), Fragment 2, 1, 3–4, trans. J. VanderKam and J. T. Milik, in D. W. Parry *et al.*, *Reader*, p. 117. Cf. J. C. Reeves *et al.*, *Enoch from Antiquity* 1, pp. 58–59; J. T. Milik *et al.*, *Enoch*, p. 12.
- [30] Moses 6:46.
- [31] Noting that the *Book of Giants* refers to the second tablet given to Mahujah by Enoch as being a “copy” (F. G. Martinez, *Book of Giants* (4Q203), 8:3, p. 260), Reeves (J. C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore*, p. 111 n. 3) conjectures: “Perhaps Enoch employed the ‘heavenly tablets’ in the formulation of his interpretation.” For summaries of the literature on heavenly books in 1 *Enoch*, Jewish, and Christian traditions, see G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 *Enoch* 1, pp. Ibid.478–480; G. Widengren, *Ascension*; L. Baynes, *Heavenly Book*; G. L. Mitton, *Book of Mormon As a Resurrected Book*.
- [32] G. W. E. Nickelsburg, 1 *Enoch* 1, 98:7–8, p. 468. Cf. 81–82, pp. 333–334, 93:2, p. 434, 97:6, p. 467, 104:7, p. 513.
- [33] D. C. Allison, *Testament*, 10:1, 6–7, 11, p. 254. See also Pseudo-Titus, *De dispositione sanctimonii* (ed. De Bruyne): “From among the earliest people Enoch the righteous was appointed to write down the deeds of the first humans”; Ms. Monacensi 287 fol. 59 (ed. Boll): “Enoch—the seventh after Adam—recorded the coming wrathful judgment of God ... on stone tablets”—both sources as cited in J. C. Reeves *et al.*, *Enoch from Antiquity* 1, pp. 92, 93. Likewise, in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Dan, the son of Jacob-Israel, finds the record of the wickedness of the sons of Levi in the book of Enoch (H. C. Kee, *Testaments*, Dan 5:6, p. 809): “I read in the Book of Enoch the Righteous that your prince is Satan and that all the spirits of sexual promiscuity and of arrogance ... cause them to commit sin before the Lord.” See also *ibid.*, Simeon 5:4, p. 786: “For I have seen in a copy of the book of Enoch that your sons will be ruined by promiscuity”; *ibid.*, Naphtali 4:1, p. 812: “I have read in the writing of holy Enoch that you will stray from the Lord, living in

accord with every wickedness of the gentiles and committing every lawlessness of Sodom”; *ibid.*, Benjamin 9:1, p. 827: “From the words of Enoch the Righteous I tell you that you will be sexually promiscuous like the promiscuity of the Sodomites.” For a general overview of the heavenly book of deeds in second temple literature, see L. Baynes, *Heavenly Book*, pp. 85–105.

[34] O. S. Wintermute, *Jubilees*, 10:17, p. 76.