

*Joseph Smith: A Life Lived in Crescendo*, edited by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw (The Interpreter Foundation and Eborn Books, 2024)

*Joseph Smith: A Life Lived in Crescendo*, edited by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, is a collection of twenty-one articles by some of the leading scholars on the life and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Because of the sheer size, coming in at slightly over 1,100 pages, the physical book is published in two volumes while the digital version is in a single file.

Editor Jeffrey M. Bradshaw frames the volume around the idea of a crescendo, suggesting that Joseph Smith's prophetic mission and teachings intensified and became more theologically rich in his final years, especially in Nauvoo. The volume's structure reflects this upward arc. The compilation examines a variety of topics and is organized into four general sections: "Doctrinal Developments in Nauvoo"; "Temple, Priesthood, and the Relief Society"; "The Martyrdom"; and "Succession in Church Leadership."

Some readers will note that a few articles have previously been published in other places, including in *BYU Studies*. However, much of the content is original to this publication. Having it all available in a single place is a helpful and welcome contribution to the field of Latter-day Saint studies and learning about the Prophet Joseph Smith.

Following a foreword by Richard E. Turley Jr., readers will find articles by Elder Kyle S. McKay (a General Authority Seventy and Church Historian and Recorder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, R. Devan Jensen, Michael A. Goodman, Barbara Morgan Gardner, Terryl L. Givens, Alexander L. Baugh, James E. Faulconer, John S. Thompson, Brian C. Hales, Rachel Cope, Lisa Olsen

Tait, Jacob D. Hawkins, Matthew J. Grow, Joseph I. Bentley, John W. Welch, R. Jean Addams, Ronald K. Esplin, and Hugh W. Nibley.

In the "Doctrinal Developments in Nauvoo" section there are seven chapters. Some of the topics covered here include the vocabulary and style of Joseph Smith's language and his teachings on premortality, salvific ordinances for the living and the dead, and the immortal destiny of humankind.

There are six chapters in the "Temple, Priesthood, and the Relief Society" section. They delve into some of the significant developments in Joseph Smith's understanding, his implementation of priesthood authority and temple ordinances, and the role of women in the Church during his Nauvoo ministry.

The third section, "The Martyrdom," has three chapters. It details the culminating events that lead to the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in Carthage Jail on June 27, 1844. This section presents comprehensive accounts of the Prophet's final legal battles and the tragic assassinations.

The final section, "Succession in Church Leadership," with its four chapters, focuses on the critical period following the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, detailing how leadership of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints transitioned to Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It also explores other claims to leadership that emerged from various individuals.

The articles in this book collectively illuminate the complexities of historical interpretation, the unfolding nature of revealed doctrine, and the foundational events that shaped The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Indeed, the information in each article adds to the last, allowing readers to see Joseph Smith's life lived in crescendo.

—Matthew B. Christensen