

# Genesis 3–4; Moses 4–5

The Fall of Adam and Eve



**14** And now my sons, I speak unto you these things for you profit and learning; for there is a God, and he hath created all things, both the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are, both things to act and things to be acted upon.

**15** And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, after he had created our first parents, and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and in fine, all things which are created, it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter.

**16** Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.

**22** And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.

**23** And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin.

**24** But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

**25** Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.

**27** Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself.

Lest there be any confusion on this issue, Elder McConkie said of Eve specifically, “She was placed on earth in the same manner as was Adam, the Mosaic account of the Lord creating her from Adam’s rib being merely figurative.” (Moses 3:20-25.)[\[iv\]](#)

Had we Adam’s book of remembrance our understanding of their union and family preparation would likely be at our perusal. Apocryphal accounts allude to their youthful nurture by heavenly messengers. Our understanding would lead to a divine nurture by the very characters that sired and bore them.

At the critical moment they were introduced, first Adam, and then Eve, to the Garden of God designed for further learning and for the fall. Here, Abraham explains, Adam and Eve received at the hand of their Father the grand key words of the Priesthood. (Abra. Facsimile 2.3) If we are reasoning, we see they were thus clothed in the robes of the Holy Priesthood. Here, in the presence of both an Eternal Father and Mother, as suggested in the Genesis and Moses accounts, they were counseled and sealed in an everlasting marriage. (Gen. 2:22-24; Moses 3:22-24) These ordinances centering in the coming Atonement, framed the base of their united faith and future actions.

Since salvation was to come through knowledge, why did Satan encourage—rather than prevent—the eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge by Adam and Eve? Surprisingly, the scriptural story makes it evident that their transgression must have been as much an important part of the Devil’s strategy as it was a central feature of the Father’s plan. In this one respect, the programs of God and Satan seem to have had something in common.

However, the difference in intention between God and Satan became apparent when it was time for Adam and Eve to take the *next* step. In this regard, the scriptures seem to suggest that the Adversary wanted Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life *directly after* they partook of the Tree of Knowledge—a danger that moved God to take immediate preventive action by the placement of the cherubim and the flaming sword. For had Adam and Eve eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Life at that time, “there would have been no death” and no “space granted unto man in which he might repent”—in other words no “probationary state” to prepare for a final judgment and resurrection.

It is easy to see a parallel between Satan’s initial proposal in the spirit world and his later strategy to “frustrate” the plan of salvation through his actions in Eden. Just as his defeated premortal scheme had proposed to provide a limited measure of “salvation” for all by precluding the opportunity for exaltation, so it seems that his unsuccessful scheme in the Garden was intended to impose an inferior form of immortality that would have forestalled the possibility of eternal life. Fortunately, however, because the Devil “knew not the mind of God,” his efforts “to destroy the world” would be in vain: the result of his deceitful manipulations to get Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was co-opted by God, and the risk of Adam and Eve’s partaking immediately of the fruit of the Tree of Life was averted by the merciful placement of the cherubim and flaming sword.

**The False and the True “Keeper of the Gate”** *By Jeffrey M. Bradshaw*

“It is proper and according to the scriptural pattern to speak of the *transgression of Adam*, but not the *sin of Adam*. (D&C 20:20; 29:40; Job 31:33; Rom. 5:14; 1 Tim. 2:14; Alma 12:31; Second Article of Faith.)

Lehi says, for instance, “If Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen.” Then he explains that while in their state of innocence in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve “knew no sin.” (2 Ne. 2:22-23.) Knowledge of good and evil is an essential element in the commission of sin, and our first parents did not have this knowledge until after they had partaken of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”<sup>[viii]</sup> Joseph Smith taught, “Adam did not commit sin in eating the fruit for God had decreed that he should eat and fall.”<sup>[ix]</sup>

## **The Profound Blessing of the Fall** *By Vivian McConkie Adams*

## Moses 5:10–12

Pearl of Great Price

**10** And in that day Adam blessed God and was filled, and began to prophesy concerning all the families of the earth, saying: Blessed be the name of God, for because of my transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God.

**11** And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed, and never should have known good and evil, and the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient.

**12** And Adam and Eve blessed the name of God, and they made all things known unto their sons and their daughters.

We understand the governing power of priesthood, and the protective and providing commission pertaining to it. However, the concept of life centers in the covenant of motherhood.

Nothing comes into existence temporally or eternally until the appointed woman, wife, and mother begins the process. Even animal life and plant life do not come into earth's sentient sphere until Eve evokes it in the joyful fall over which angels rejoiced and which opened the world. It is for this reason that the Prophet Joseph Smith explained that when the Genesis term *ruach*, or the *breath of life* “applies to Eve, it should be translated lives.”<sup>[ii]</sup>

<sup>[ii]</sup> Joseph Fielding Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p.301

iii Bruce R. McConkie, quoted in, “Eve and the Fall,” in *Woman*, Deseret Book,[1988] p. 60

iv Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], p. 242)

v J. Reuben Clark, *On the Way to Immortality and Eternal Life*, Priesthood Manual, p. 26)

The responsibility to bear children had been given to Eve. She was the individual into whom God had breathed the breath of lives. As God would not coerce man to fall, Adam could not force Eve to follow him into the world of pain and suffering. Eve must be willing – in the most absolute sense – to face death to bring life, to enter the valley of the shadow of death to bring forth children. Both could partake only when she was willing to say, “I will partake.” Her decision was not only a manifestation of faith, but of inexpressible love. That their decision was more united than we generally suppose is shown by the words, she “did eat, and also gave unto her husband *with* her.” (Moses 4:12)

We ought also understand here that this is the moment in which Eve enabled Adam to become a priest and a king with the gift of eternal posterity. Only she could hand him this gift. That Adam hearkened to his wife in the matter of the Fall suggests his willingness to accept that fatherhood.

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Though various figurative elements are employed in Eve's introduction to Adam, there are also two literal details in this part of their story that highlight Christ's redeeming role: She is introduced as Adam's help meet.<sup>6</sup> This oft-misunderstood term has caused harm as it has led some women to feel "less than" their male counterparts as if they are intended to be subservient assistants. But in reality, "help" is derived from the Hebrew word 'ezer, which means "to rescue" or "to save." Elsewhere in the Old Testament, this term refers almost exclusively to the kind of help the Lord gives—divine help.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Eve's Hebrew name, Chavvah, means "Life," symbolic of the Savior, who is "the light and the life of the world."<sup>8</sup> (See Moses 4:26; see also Genesis 3:20; 3 Nephi 9:18.)

What a difference these linguistic details make in our understanding of Eve! Just as we would never consider God to be a subordinate assistant, Eve was a crucial counterpart to Adam; only together could they successfully progress and ultimately become like and return to our heavenly parents.

As President Russell M. Nelson has taught, "It was our glorious Mother Eve—with her far-reaching vision of our Heavenly Father's plan—who initiated what we call 'the Fall.' Her wise and courageous choice and Adam's supporting decision moved God's plan of happiness forward. They made it possible for each of us to come to Earth, receive a body, and prove that we would choose to stand up for Jesus Christ now, just as we did premortally."<sup>11</sup>

President Dallin H. Oaks said, "It was Eve who first transgressed the limits of Eden in order to initiate the conditions of mortality. Her act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression but eternally a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same. And thus Eve and 'Adam fell that men might be.'"<sup>3</sup>

"Some Christians condemn Eve for her act, concluding that she and her daughters are somehow flawed by it. Not the Latter-day Saints! Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve's act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode called the Fall."<sup>4</sup>

God spoke to Eve of what she would experience as she embraced her destiny to be “the mother of all living” (Moses 4:26) as she and Adam complied with God’s commandment to multiply and replenish the earth. These teachings were surely meant as instruction for Eve’s daughters, who would follow after her. They are preserved in scripture.

On the face of it, the Lord’s words to Eve might seem harsh: “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children” (Moses 4:22). Hugh Nibley noted:

“The key is the word for sorrow, *atsav*, meaning to labor, to toil, to sweat, to do something very hard. To multiply does not mean to add or increase but to repeat over and over again; the word in the Septuagint is *plethynomai*, as in the multiplying of words in the repetitious prayers of the ancients. Both the conception and the labor of Eve will be multiple: she will have many children.”

Thus, in saying He would “multiply thy sorrow and thy conception,” God is not meaning that childbirth will be a cause for sadness. Rather, He seems to have been telling Eve that in mortality childbirth will be difficult, that in childbirth she will sweat and toil and experience pain. This instruction lets her know what is to be expected as she gives bodies to waiting spirits.

God is not cursing Eve or causing pain to be inflicted on her. Instead, He is making her aware that her newly mortal body will experience pain in the process of childbirth—a pain that will come and go and be repeated many times.

From the time of creation, God envisioned the male-female relationship as one of partnership and support. That is the pattern given by God and the only way His work can effectively move forward. Only when women and men come to understand the significance of that first partnership, as they ponder the illuminating statements uttered by our prophets concerning Eve, “the mother of all living” (Moses 4:26), can they begin to use it to benefit their own lives.

President Thomas S. Monson explained:

“Some of you may at times have cried out in your suffering, wondering why our Heavenly Father would allow you to go through whatever trials you are facing. ...

“Our mortal life, however, was never meant to be easy or consistently pleasant. Our Heavenly Father ... knows that we learn and grow and become refined through hard challenges, heartbreaking sorrows, and difficult choices. Each one of us experiences dark days when our loved ones pass away, painful times when our health is lost, feelings of being forsaken when those we love seem to have abandoned us. These and other trials present us with the real test of our ability to endure.”

“Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25).

The Church in its divine mission and we in our personal lives seem to face increasing opposition today. Perhaps as the Church grows in strength and we members grow in faith and obedience, Satan increases the strength of his opposition so we will continue to have “opposition in all things.”

Some of this opposition even comes from Church members. Some who use personal reasoning or wisdom to resist prophetic direction give themselves a label borrowed from elected bodies—“the loyal opposition.” However appropriate for a democracy, there is no warrant for this concept in the government of God’s kingdom, where questions are honored but opposition is not (see [Matthew 26:24](#)).

As another example, there are many things in our early Church history, such as what Joseph Smith did or did not do in every circumstance, that some use as a basis for opposition. To all I say, exercise faith and put reliance on the Savior’s teaching that we should “know them by their fruits” ([Matthew 7:16](#)). The Church is making great efforts to be transparent with the records we have, but after all we can publish, our members are sometimes left with basic questions that cannot be resolved by study. That is the Church history version of “opposition in all things.” Some things can be learned only by faith (see [D&C 88:118](#)). Our ultimate reliance must be on faith in the witness we have received from the Holy Ghost.

Elder Dale G. Renlund taught:

“Our Heavenly Father’s goal in parenting is not to have His children *do* what is right; it is to have His children *choose* to do what is right and ultimately become like Him. If He simply wanted us to be obedient, He would use immediate rewards and punishments to influence our behaviors.

“But God is not interested in His children just becoming trained and obedient ‘pets’ who will not chew on His slippers in the celestial living room. No, God wants His children to grow up spiritually and join Him in the family business” (“[Choose You This Day](#),” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2018, 104).

“It must needs be that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be agents unto themselves” ([D&C 29:39](#)).