



Lesson 4 “Because of My Transgression My Eyes Are Opened”

Moses 4; 5:1-15; 6:48-62

Purpose: To Understand that the Fall as a necessary part of Heavenly Father’s plan for us.

The Fall is one of the most misunderstood doctrines in Christendom. The correct understanding of this miraculous event changes an individual’s viewpoint of humanity for one of depravity to one of hope. There is an innate goodness in mankind and the Fall as explained correctly in the scriptures foster hope and faith in Jesus Christ.

“The three greatest events that ever have occurred in recorded history, to which man has access, are:

1. The creation of the heavens and the earth, of man, and of all forms of life;
2. The fall of man, of all forms of life, and of the earth itself from their primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state; and
3. The infinite and eternal atonement, which ransoms man, all living things, and the earth also from their fallen state so that the salvation of the earth and of all living things may be completed.

These three divine events—the three pillars of eternity—are inseparably woven together into one grand tapestry known as the eternal plan of salvation. We view the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ as the center and core and heart of revealed religion.

But had there been no fall, there could have been no atonement. The fall of Adam brought temporal and spiritual death into the world, and it is from these deaths that man and all forms of life are ransomed through the atonement wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam brought mortality; Christ brought immortality.” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 81

“Now, finally, we read again the Lord's great pronouncement, the revelation that came by the power of the Holy Ghost to Eve—one of the greatest sermons. (I suppose the shortest sermon ever preached by a person was preached by Mother Eve.) Mother Eve declared that the power of the Holy Ghost opened her eyes and gave her understanding. She said: "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" (Moses 5:11).

So should we, with Eve, rejoice in the Fall, which permitted the coming of the knowledge of good and evil, which permitted the coming of children into mortality, which permitted the receiving of joy of redemption and the eternal life which God gives to all. And so Adam likewise, blessed with the gift of the Holy Ghost, "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" (Moses 5:10).

May the Lord give us His understanding of the great boon that has thus come to us. And let us honor in our minds and in our teachings the great legacy which Adam and Eve gave to us when, through their experience, by the exercise of their own agency, they partook of fruit which gave them the seeds of mortal life and gave to us, their descendants down through the generations of time, that great boon by which we too can receive the joy of our redemption, and in our flesh see God, and have eternal life." (The Teachings of Harold B. Lee, edited by Clyde J. Williams [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996], 35)

The Book of Moses

See Supplement Lesson 1

Commentary:

Moses 4

1 And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying: That Satan, whom thou hast commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning, and he came before me, saying—Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor.

2 But, behold, my Beloved Son, which was my Beloved and chosen from the beginning, said unto me—Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said that it is "extremely important to get straight what happened in that premortal council. It was not an unstructured meeting, nor was it a discussion between plans, nor an idea-producing session, as to how to formulate the plan for salvation and carry it out. Our Father's plan was known, and the actual question put was whom the Father should send to carry out the plan" (Deposition of a Disciple [1976], 11; see also John 7:16–18).

3 Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power; by the power of mine Only Begotten, I caused that he should be cast down;

*Elder Dallin H. Oaks, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "Satan's method of assuring 'that one soul shall not be lost' (Moses 4:1) would be to 'destroy the agency of man' (Moses 4:3). Under his plan, Satan would have been our master, and he would have '[led us] captive at his will' (Moses 4:4). Without the power of choice, we would have been mere robots or puppets in his hands" ("Free Agency and Freedom," in *The Book of Mormon: Second Nephi, The Doctrinal Structure*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. [1989], 4).*

4 And he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice.

President Joseph F. Smith taught: "Let it not be forgotten that the evil one has great power in the earth, and that by every possible means he seeks to darken the minds of men and then offers them falsehood and deception in the guise of truth. Satan is a skillful imitator, and as genuine gospel truth is given the world in ever-increasing abundance, so he spreads the counterfeit coin of false doctrine. Beware of his

spurious currency, it will purchase for you nothing but disappointment, misery and spiritual death” (“Witchcraft,” Juvenile Instructor, 15 Sept. 1902, 562).

President Brigham Young said: “Every person who desires and strives to be a Saint is closely watched by fallen spirits that came here when Lucifer [sic] fell, and by the spirits of wicked persons who have been here in tabernacles and departed from them. . . . Those spirits are never idle; they are watching every person who wishes to do right, and are continually prompting them to do wrong” (in Journal of Discourses, 7:239).

6 And Satan put it into the heart of the serpent, (for he had drawn away many after him,) and he sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God, wherefore he sought to destroy the world.

Elder James E. Talmage explained that Satan actually “furthered the purposes of the Creator by tempting Eve; yet his design was to thwart the Lord’s plan. We are definitely told that ‘he knew not the mind of God, wherefore he sought to destroy the world.’ [Moses 4:6.] Yet his diabolical effort, far from being the initiatory step toward destruction, contributed to the plan of man’s eternal progression” (The Articles of Faith, 69).

10 And the serpent said unto the woman: Ye shall not surely die;

God told Adam that he would die if he ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Satan’s statement that Adam would not die was an evil exploitation and illustrates the pernicious nature of Satan, “the father of all lies” (Moses 4:4), for he attempted to show God as a liar. But God is a God of truth and cannot lie (see Ether 3:12). Soon after Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, they were forced to leave the garden and the presence of the Lord, thus suffering a spiritual death. Additionally, when they fell, their bodies changed from a nonmortal state to a mortal state and thus became subject to physical death. (See D&C 29:40–43.)

11 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

When Adam and Eve partook of the fruit they became mortal and, in the sense of knowing good and evil, began to become like God. But Satan implied that God’s forbidding them to partake of the fruit was because God did not want them to become as the Gods, trying to make it appear that God’s motives were selfish. The truth is that God’s work and glory is to help all of His children to one day become as He is (see Moses 1:39).

12 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it became pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make her wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and also gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

Neither Adam nor Eve partook of the fruit because they loved Satan more than God or because they wanted to rebel against God. Elder Dallin H. Oaks taught:

“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’ [2 Nephi 2:25].

“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. . . . Brigham Young declared, ‘We should never blame Mother Eve, not the least’ (in Journal of Discourses, 13:145). Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: ‘I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. . . . This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin . . . for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!’ [Doctrines of Salvation, 1:114–15]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 98; or Ensign, Nov. 1993, 73).

14 And they heard the voice of the Lord God, as they were walking in the garden, in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife went to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

Moses 3:25 tells us that before the Fall Adam and Eve were not ashamed, despite their nakedness. Once they gained knowledge of good and evil, they became conscious of their disobedience and unworthiness before God. It may be said that they became aware and ashamed of their spiritual “nakedness.” As fallen beings, they had to face God with a sense of their own guilt. As Alma explained to his son Corianton, “Ye cannot hide your crimes from God; and except ye repent they will stand as a testimony against you at the last day” (Alma 39:8; see also 2 Nephi 9:14).

19 And I, the Lord God, said unto the woman: What is this thing which thou hast done? And the woman said: The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

God “knoweth all things, and there is not anything save he knows it” (2 Nephi 9:20). Why then did God ask Adam and Eve the questions in Moses 4:15–19? Because, as Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught, “personal accountability for all of one’s acts underlies the whole gospel plan and is the natural outgrowth of the law of free agency” (Mormon Doctrine, 15).

20 And I, the Lord God, said unto the serpent: Because thou hast done this thou shalt be acursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life;

“Being cursed is the very opposite of being blessed; God’s blessing graciously invokes good, whereas his curse justly invokes evil upon one deserving it. Thus Satan was informed through symbolic terms that he would not have the privilege of earth life that even cattle and beasts have” (Ellis T. Rasmussen, A Latter-day Saint Commentary on the Old Testament [1993], 16).

22 Unto the woman, I, the Lord God, said: I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Elder James E. Talmage wrote: “Adam, the patriarch of the race, rejoiced in the assurance of the Savior’s appointed ministry, through the acceptance of which, he, the transgressor, might gain redemption. Brief mention of the plan of salvation, the author of which is Jesus Christ, appears in the promise given of God following the fall—that though the devil, represented by the serpent in Eden, should have power to bruise the heel of Adam’s posterity, through the seed of the woman should come the power to bruise the adversary’s head. It is significant that this assurance of eventual victory over sin and its inevitable effect, death, both of which were introduced to earth through Satan, the arch-enemy of mankind, was to be realized through the offspring of woman; the promise was not made specifically to the man, nor to the pair. The only instance of offspring from woman dissociated from mortal fatherhood is the birth of Jesus the Christ, who was the earthly Son of a mortal mother, begotten by an immortal Father. He is the Only Begotten of the Eternal Father in the flesh, and was born of woman.” (Jesus the Christ, 3rd ed. [1916], 43).

Concerning this phrase, President Spencer W. Kimball said: “I have a question about the word rule. It gives the wrong impression. I would prefer to use the word preside because that’s what he does. A righteous husband presides over his wife and family” (Ensign, Mar. 1976, 72). In Ephesians 5:22–31 and Doctrine and Covenants 121:41–46 the Lord gave clear instructions on how husbands should preside.

23 And unto Adam, I, the Lord God, said: Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the fruit of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying—Thou shalt not eat of it, acursed shall be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.

“If Eve must labor to bring forth, so too must Adam labor (Genesis 3:17–19; Moses 4:23) to quicken the earth so it shall bring forth. Both of them bring forth life with sweat and tears, and Adam is not the favored party. If his labor is not as severe as hers, it is more protracted. For Eve’s life will be spared long after her childbearing—‘nevertheless thy life shall be spared’—while Adam’s toil must go

on to the end of his days: *In sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life!* Even retirement is no escape from that sorrow” (Hugh Nibley, *Old Testament and Related Studies*, John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton, eds. [1986], 90).

25 By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, until thou shalt return unto the ground—for thou shalt surely die—for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou wast, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Pointing out the falseness of what Satan had said to Eve (see Moses 4:10), the Lord told Adam, “Thou shalt surely die” (v. 25). Adam and Eve experienced a spiritual death when they were driven from the Garden of Eden and from the presence of the Lord. They also became mortal and thus subject to physical death.

31 So I drove out the man, and I placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life.

Cherubim are “figures representing heavenly creatures, the exact form being unknown. They are found in the Holy of Holies, on the Mercy Seat of the Ark (Ex. 25:18, 22; 1 Kgs. 6:23–28; Heb. 9:5), and in the visions of Ezekiel (Ezek. 10; 11:22)” (Bible Dictionary, “cherubim,” 632).

32 (And these are the words which I spake unto my servant Moses, and they are true even as I will; and I have spoken them unto you. See thou show them unto no man, until I command you, except to them that believe. Amen.)

Moses 5:1-15

1 And it came to pass that after I, the Lord God, had driven them out, that Adam began to till the earth, and to have dominion over all the beasts of the field, and to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, as I the Lord had commanded him. And Eve, also, his wife, did labor with him.

“... Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners” (Ensign, Nov. 1995, 102; italics added).

5 And he gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

Following commandments that we do not understand is not “blind faith or obedience,” it is obedience. Understanding is them promised to follow.

“I have come to know that if we will do so, even though we may not understand at first, the Lord will tell us, as he told Adam, why we are so commanded.” (The Holy Temple, Boyd K. Packer [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980], 264.)

7 And then the angel spake, saying: This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “Whenever the Lord revealed Himself to men in ancient days, and commanded them to offer sacrifice to Him, ... it was done that they might look forward in faith to the time of His coming, and rely upon the power of that atonement for a

remission of their sins" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1938], 60-61; see also 58). ("The Law of Sacrifice," Ensign, Oct. 1998, 8)

A plan was laid out for us from the very beginning. The central figure in his plan of salvation is our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. His atoning sacrifice for all mankind is the centerpiece of the history of our Father in Heaven's children here on earth. Each of us who accepts the divine plan must accept the role of our Savior and covenant to keep his laws that our Father has developed for us. As we accept Christ in spirit and in deed, we may win our salvation. We read in the scriptures: "Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore" (Moses 5:8). ("Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," Ensign, May 1996, 53)

"From the very beginning, Father Adam was commanded to "call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore." (Moses 5:8.) Adam prayed. Abraham prayed. Moses prayed. And so did every prophet pray to that God whence came his strength." Thomas S. Monson, (Conference Classics, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981-1984], 3: 36 - 37

9 And in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam, which beareth record of the Father and the Son, saying: I am the Only Begotten of the Father from the beginning, henceforth and forever, that as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed, and all mankind, even as many as will.

This last quotation, or summary, shows this important fact, that though our first parents were driven out of the garden of Eden, and were even separated from the presence of God by a veil, they still retained a knowledge of his existence, and that sufficiently to move them to call upon him. And further, that no sooner was the plan of redemption revealed to man, and he began to call upon God, than the Holy Spirit was given, bearing record of the Father and Son. (Lectures on Faith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1985], 2:25)

No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 328)

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.

"The Prophet Joseph Smith referred to their choice to eat of the fruit as a 'transgression,' not a sin (A of F 1:2). Similarly, Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: 'It is proper and according to the scriptural pattern to speak of the transgression of Adam, but not the sin of Adam. 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.'" (Robert J. Woodford, " 'In the Beginning': A Latter-day Perspective," Ensign, Jan. 1998, 18)

13 And Satan came among them, saying: I am also a son of God; and he commanded them, saying: Believe it not; and they believed it not, and they loved Satan more than God. And men began from that time forth to be carnal, sensual, and devilish.

President Ezra Taft Benson, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said: "Whenever the God of Heaven establishes by revelation his design, Satan always comes among men to pervert the doctrine, saying, 'Believe it not.' He often establishes a counterfeit system, designed to deceive the children of men" ("A Vision and a Hope for the Youth of Zion," 1977 Devotional Speeches of the Year [1978], 75).

Moses 6:48-52

48 And he said unto them: Because that Adam fell, we are; and by his fall came death; and we are made partakers of misery and woe.

“There is an interesting contrast between Enoch's teachings and Lehi's. Both declare that Adam fell so that mankind could experience mortality. But consider the doctrine that follows:

Lehi: Adam fell that men might be, and men are that they might have joy. (2 Ne. 2:25)

Enoch: Because that Adam fell, we are... and we are made partakers of misery and woe. (Moses 6:48)

Well, which is it? Do we exist that we "might have joy?" or do we exist in order to partake "of misery and woe." These ideas seem completely opposite. And, of course, we know that both are completely true. We might have joy if we choose to keep the commandments; but we will all sin and suffer the "misery and woe" of mortality. Lehi said it best:

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things...

Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto man that he should act for himself...

Wherefore men are free...they are free to choose liberty and eternal life... or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil. “(2 Ne. 2:11-27)

50 But God hath made known unto our fathers that all men must repent.

Because of Adam's Fall, all mankind suffer physical death (the separation of the immortal spirit from the mortal body) and spiritual death (separation from the presence of God). Furthermore, because people yield to the temptations of Satan, they become “carnal, sensual, and devilish, and are shut out from the presence of God” until they repent (Moses 6:49). The good news of the plan of salvation is that through the Atonement of Jesus Christ all mankind will overcome physical death and can overcome spiritual death (see Romans 3:23; Mosiah 16:3-4; Alma 11:42-43; Helaman 14:14-18; Moses 6:52).

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