

General Comments on Genesis 2-3

The Fall was Deliberate

Some in Christendom see the Fall of Man as a mistake, something God did not intend. God created paradise, and Satan came in and ruined it. However, the Latter-day Saint view is the Fall is an integral part of the Plan of Salvation. This view is supported by careful examination of an often overlooked piece of text in Genesis 2, "to till the ground". Genesis chapter 2 verse 5 states:

"...the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground."

The "till" is a paraphrase based upon context and would be literally translated to "work". At this point, man has not yet been created so there isn't anyone to till the ground. The Creation story continues where Adam and Eve are created, and then they partake of the fruit of the forbidden tree, and the Lord curses them. In the curse the Lord states:

And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed [is] the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat [of] it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou [art], and unto dust shalt thou return. (Gen. 3:17-19)

The Lord curses Adam with hard work as a result of his sin. Also, recall that the Hebrew "`adam" means mankind/Adam and "`adamah" means "soil". He will work the soil until he returns to the soil in death. Then in Gen. 3:23 we have:

Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

The Lord casts Adam out of the Garden to "till the ground", the original premise from 2:5. In 2:5 there was no man to till the ground, now there is a man to till the ground. Thus, God's intent from the start was to have a man to till the soil. This necessarily implies the Fall was intended by God and not a mistake.

This resolves a major theological problem with the Genesis account of the Fall. This issue of tilling the ground is overlooked because readers are focused on the Creation and the negative aspects of the Fall, as opposed to the positive results. If it is a curse, then it has to be something bad, right? Clearly not in this case.

Law of Sacrifice Initiated

With the expulsion of Adam and Eve the Law of Sacrifice is initiated. The curse laid on Adam is that he must now toil his entire life, to produce food for his family. The man is to sacrifice his life in chronic toil to sustain his family. Eve is cursed with pain in childbirth and sorrow over her children. The woman is to sacrifice her life in acute pain giving life and chronic sorrow over her children.

The Lord then uses the skin of an animal to clothe them when they are expelled from the garden. Clearly, the animal's life was sacrificed to clothe and protect them.

Some time later, Adam is told to and performs literal animal sacrifices and is educated on their purpose, cf. Moses 5:4-8.

Comments on Genesis 2

The Creation narrative from Genesis 1 continues into verse 3 of this chapter. Verse 4 starts the so-called "second Creation account", as discussed in the general comments on Genesis 1. This chapter focuses mainly on the creation of Adam and Eve.

1 THUS the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

v1-3 A tightly structure poem based upon repetition, verse 2 in particular. The poem emphasizes God's resting from His work.

Especially note the very different reading presented in the PofGP Abraham account as far as what happened on the seventh day, also cp. D&C 77:12.

4 These [are] the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and [there was] not a man to till the ground. 6 But there went up a mist

from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. 7 And the LORD God formed man [of] the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

v4-7 These verses provide a segue between the first and second Creation stories. The first being Gen 1:1-2:3 and the second being 2:4-24. The topic of the two Creation stories and reconciliation of them is discussed at length in the comments on Genesis 1.

Verse 4 comments on the preceding Creation story of 1:1-2:3 and says that was the history of the generations of the heavens and earth. Verses 5-6 then indicate that none of the living things referenced in the preceding story had actually been placed on the earth yet, but was only planned "before it was in the earth...before it grew", because as of yet no water had gone up upon the face of the dry ground to water it. According to verse 7 the first living thing made was Adam.

v4 "the generations", usually when we use this phrase we think of human generations, but in this case it is referring to the Creation of the earth. The Hebrew term here is identical to that appearing repeatedly in Genesis and Numbers when the generations of Abraham and Israel are enumerated. As human populations grow and change under the guidance of the Lord's hand, so did the earth grow and change under the guidance of the Lord's hand. The science of Geology teaches us the earth underwent many radical changes before it came to be what we now know.

v5-6 "the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth... there went up a mist", the fundamental necessity of water for life is closely tied to Providence. Rain is more than a mechanical natural process, it is a means of the Lord exercising His will upon the face of the earth. Hence the numerous blessings and curses associated with rain or drought, bounty or famine, cf. Lev. 26, Deut. 28.

v5 See the PofGP Moses and Abraham readings for considerable additional explanatory text on what is presently occurring.

"not a man to till the ground", the Hebrew is "'adam" for the English "man" and "adama" for "ground". The word play associates man closely with the earth. Such is the relationship expressed when the curse is meted out in the following chapter when Adam is told that he will return to the soil from whence he came. This imagery serves to both symbolically exalt and debase man. It exalts him because God lifted the soil from the ground to make man, but it also debases him in that he is made from the soil below his feet and is therefore less than God who is

independent from him and above him. The theological implication is man is in-between heaven and earth.

v6 "a mist", this would be better translated "a flow" or "a fount". Water flowed up over the face of the land and made it possible for life. The absence of water makes life impossible.

v7 "the dust", also fairly translated "particles" or "clay". This creation of man from the dust/particles/clay of the earth is played on by Jesus in John 9:6 when he makes clay and anoints the blind man's eyes with it. Jesus is showing he has power over Creation and was the original Creator who fashioned man from clay in the first place, so he can now heal a blind man's eyes.

"the breath of life...a living soul", the living soul is more than simply the organic machine that composes the human body. There is the divine element of the spirit which combined with the organic body makes a living soul.

Contemporary Atheists and Materialists deny the existence of the spirit and insist man is only an organic machine. All this despite the fact that in 1864 Louis Pasteur proved false the theory of Spontaneous Generation. Naturally, the rationalizations of modern Atheists and Materialists are more sophisticated than those of their predecessors, but they are fundamentally the same at their core. Try as they might, they will never be able to contradict the principle of this verse, that life only comes from life and the spirit of man came from God.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

v8-9 The Lord creates a garden containing plants and trees for the man to live in. This garden contains all the man needs for life, as well as the tree of knowledge.

v8 "Eden", Everett Fox in The Five Books Of Moses states the word means "Land of Pleasure", but indicates it may be a folk etymology.

v9 The PofGP Moses account indicates that plants have some sort of spiritual component such that when combined with their physical component they become "living souls". Clearly their spirits would be quite different from that of man, but the text certainly forwards the view that they have one.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. 11 The name of the first [is] Pison: that [is] it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where [there is] gold; 12 And the gold of that land [is] good: there [is] bdellium and the onyx stone. 13 And the name of the second river [is] Gihon: the same [is] it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. 14 And the name of the third river [is] Hiddekel: that [is] it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river [is] Euphrates.

v10-14 This text is something of a diversion as it describes the setting of the Garden. Attempts to try and place the Garden of Eden in a literal Geographical setting using the river names is impossible as the rivers are rivers contemporary to him, Moses, not Adam and are clearly nowhere near each other. The only sensible reading is that Moses' intent (note the lengthy detail on the rivers and their lands is entirely omitted in the PofGP Abraham account, suggesting an author-specific commentary) is to portray the Garden as miraculously well-watered and on the absolute most choice ground imaginable. The four rivers watering Eden are likened to the four most abundant rivers know to him, notably rivers that never run dry even in summer, which drain the four corners of the earth for the benefit of Eden, and come from bountifully blessed lands. That Moses would go to such great detail to describe these rivers can only make sense if he is being emphatic in his description of the Garden. To support this reading, note the well-watered condition of Eden is used as a prominent Millennial era covenant blessing in Isa. 51:3 and Isa. 58:11.

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

v15-17 When the Lord places Adam in the Garden He permits to eat any of the fruit of garden, but explicitly prohibits the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Eating of that fruit will result in death. Note, this implicitly grants Adam access to the tree of life. Also, note only Adam has been created, and not Eve. Eve is not present when the command to not eat the fruit is disbursed.

v17 "the tree of knowledge of good and evil", Jewish commentators generally suggest the "good and evil" statement is a merism, or a statement of all-inclusiveness. Thus the tree would represent a knowledge of all things pertaining to morality.

On the PofGP Moses account of this, particularly note the additional text concerning the Lord's statement that he is free to choose for himself.

Volumes could be written on the symbolism surrounding the tree with cross references to Lehi's Tree of Life and the numerous other Scriptural parables which draw their meaning from vegetation and agricultural settings, not to mention the many cultural myths which parallel the imagery. But, regardless of the potentials for symbolism, the text presents a literal tree.

Aside from the legitimate discussion of the symbolism of the tree, some commentators seek to present the tree as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Any attempt to interpret the tree as a euphemism falls on unfertile soil because it presumes Adam and Eve were not naive to things carnal previous to the Fall, and all three texts are completely unified in their presentation of them as completely naive to any matters of immorality (e.g., v. 25 indicates plainly they were completely naive to an carnal implications of their own nakedness).

Furthermore, verses 22-24 unmistakably forward the view Adam and Eve were married at her creation. Joseph F. Smith and Harold B. Lee both comment on this topic:

The first marriage on record appertaining to this earth was solemnized by the Almighty. The first couple married were immortal beings Adam and Eve, our first parents before they had partaken of the forbidden fruit and became subject to the penalty of death Marriage, as then understood, could not have been what it is now popularly supposed to be by the so-called Christian word. Then the marriage vow was made and the ceremony was performed by immortal or celestial beings, with no reference to death or to a time when that sacred and holy union should cease. (Joseph F. Smith, Millennial Star, 36:312.)

Now let us consider the first marriage that was performed after the earth was organized. Adam, the first man, had been created.... We then find this recorded: 'And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.' After the Lord had formed Eve, he 'brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh.' (Gen. 2:18, 22-24.) These words were undoubtedly just what they sound

like. They were very likely the words spoken by Adam reciting the vows of the first marriage upon this earth. (Harold B. Lee, Youth and The Church, pages. 128-29, as quoted in Lund's A Companion To Your Study Of The Doctrine And Covenants, Vol. 2: Appendix A, page 173)

Speculative attempts to impute sexual immorality to Adam and Eve are greeted by arguments from the Scriptures which flatly contradict them.

18 And the LORD God said, [It is] not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought [them] unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that [was] the name thereof. 20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This [is] now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

v18-25 These verses present Adam as being alone upon the face of the earth in a Garden with no animals (v. 18). God announces it is not good for man to be alone, and then creates all of the various creatures of the earth, none of which are considered suitable (v. 19-20). Only when a woman is created from the rib of the man is the suitable mate discovered (v. 21-22). Adam recognizes this woman, created from him, is his the fitting helper (v. 23). Thus shall a man leave his parents and unite with a wife to become a completed pair (v. 24).

v18 "help meet", in a modern translation this is typically translated to something like "a fitting helper" (JPS) or "suitable helper" (NAS). The Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary on Genesis states the Hebrew means, "literally, 'a helper corresponding to him.' This term cannot be demeaning because Hebrew 'ezer', employed here to describe the intended role of the woman, is often used of God in relation to man."

Much has been made of this term by feminists who point out the Hebrew term can be loosely translated to "strength" as well. In their view the woman is the man's strength, and so on. This

is then used to justify various speculations concerning Eve's role in the Fall and so forth. However, the contextual reading is plainly one that presents the man and woman as a complimentary unity. There is no stronger or weaker or inferior or superior in a unity.

v20 The parade of animals preceding Eve indicates none of them are suitable for man as a help-meet despite their utility as draft animals, for food, or clothing. This obviously indicates all other animals are inferior to Eve with respect to both literal and figurative order in creation. Particularly note in the PofGP Abraham account the details of Eve's creation are dislocated in the text as compared with the Genesis and PofGP Moses accounts, but the identification of her as help-meet is maintained uniformly with the Genesis and PofGP Moses versions. This would emphasize her equality with Adam and superiority to all other animals, while still maintaining the sequence.

v23 Adam's comments form a simple poem:

This [is] now bone of my bones, and
flesh of my flesh:
she shall be called Woman, because
she was taken out of Man.

The Hebrew on "she shall be called Woman (Hebr: 'ishshah), because she was taken out of Man (Hebr: 'ish)" suggests unity as well as the complimentary nature of Man and Woman. Adam's pronouncement that she is "bone of my bones...flesh of my flesh" and the subsequent statement in v. 24 concerning the Man's cleaving/clinging to his wife both suggest the Man without the Woman is incomplete and deliberately so by the Lord's design.

Note the part used to create Eve is the rib. The rib comes from the side of the body beneath the arm. The Semitic concept of the body as having inferior and superior parts is very similar to that of modern anatomy. The head is superior and the foot inferior, cf. Isa. 9:13-14, 1 Cor. 12:21. Thus, being made from the rib indicates she is not inferior or superior to Adam, but equal and should be under his arm close to him. Verse 21 also forwards a very literal reading on the extraction of the rib from Adam.

v24 While this verse is obviously intended as a comment to the reader, Moses may have been alluding to Adam leaving his Father in Heaven as well as Mother in Heaven to be with Eve as well, thus foreshadowing the Fall.

"cleave", the Hebrew term "d-v-k" here is the same as that used in describing a cloven hoof, and means "a thing that is two but one" and is superficially contradictory. In the case of the hoof, it is two toes joined together at the base. Or, for example, if you have a meat cleaver and you cleave a piece of meat in two, it was one and is now two. In the case of the Man and Woman, they are to be joined as one in marriage.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

v25 This verse is best placed with the next chapter, as it is a lead in to the subject of the Fall.

In context this passage is saying Adam and Eve were in a naive state when it came to matters of immorality, they were like little children, naked yet unashamed. This context is plain from the subsequent shame they experience after eating the forbidden fruit.

Taken out of context, it can be read to mean a married man and woman have nothing to be ashamed of when it comes to matters of nakedness between themselves.

In addition to being naked, the Hebrew word "`arummim" translated here to "naked" is playing on the Hebrew word "`arum" translated to "subtil" in 3:1. It is insinuating Adam and Eve were "subtil" (a better translation would be "shrewd" or "cunning"), but the serpent was the most subtil of all of them. Like small children they were generally naive to matters of sexuality, but they were not wholly without guile.

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