

Old Testament 4
“Because of My Transgressions My Eyes are Opened
(Moses 4, 5, 6)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background. New material is at the end.)

To fully understand the story of Adam and Eve, we must recognize that this powerful event has three levels of meaning. These three levels are shown below:

I. The first level are the real events of the historical Adam and Eve who opened mortality to us.

A. We need to understand that **Adam and Eve were noble souls, foreordained to open the way for us through mortality to Eternal Life.**

B. Whatever the historical Adam did, it was not a sin, but a “transgression.” (See Dallin Oaks quote, p. 15-16 of GD manual.)

C. Joseph Fielding Smith emphasized that Adam and Eve could not be guilty of any moral sin, as many assume, pointing out *they were married* and husband and wife. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 1:114-15.)

D. Joseph Fielding Smith also said, “Now this is the way I interpret that: The Lord said to Adam, here is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you want to stay here, then you cannot eat of that fruit. If you want to stay here, then I forbid you to eat it. But you may act for yourself, and you may eat of it if you want to. And if you eat it, you will die.” (“Fall --- Atonement--- Resurrection--- Sacrament,” in Church Educational System, *Charge to Religious Educators*, 124.

E. Thus, **Adam & Eve chose to eat, knowing they would fall, or become mortal, but eventually would receive greater blessings in the end.**

F. The real Adam and Eve were assured that while temporarily losing the fullness of God’s Presence, the Savior would act to bring them back into God’s Presence at some future time.

II. The **second level of meaning** is that Adam and Eve served as representatives of us, as individuals and as mankind, **who would all sin**, all being deceived by Satan at some time.

A. The very name “Adam” means “many” or “mankind.”

B. Understanding this level of meaning **helps us understand God’s anger at sin in the story, [for God’s anger is confusing if Adam and Eve acted wisely and did not truly sin].**

C. **But all of us as mortals, through our own sins, alienate ourselves from God and require a Redeemer** to be able to return into God’s presence.

III. The **third level of meaning** is **that Adam also represented Jesus Christ as a future Bridegroom who would take upon himself His bride’s guilt in order to redeem her.** (Note Paul confirmed Adam is a “figure of him who was to come.” See Romans 5:14).

A. We miss significant meaning if we do not understand the patterns in Adam which foreshadowed Jesus Christ. Understanding this level answers many questions.

1. The Bridegroom and His bride were to be “One.” To verify the Adam/Jesus connection, Paul attached to the Savior precise words from Genesis describing the oneness of Adam and Eve. But he related it to Jesus Christ and His Church. “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones...I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 2:30-2).

2. Jehovah began through Adam to foreshadow His role as covenant-maker with His people, **thus serving as a Bridegroom**. Then He continually reinforced that concept. In doing so, He revealed many significant aspects of His future work of salvation. When He came into mortality, He deliberately related many of His words and actions to His role as Bridegroom and to real wedding traditions. Many of those traditions had developed because the Israelites patterned their wedding customs after the covenant relationship they knew were offered them by Jehovah.

B. Here are fuller details of how Adam's Story taught of Christ and His people [Bride].

1. A paradise is created (Genesis 1:1-25).
2. This Paradise is gifted with tree of life and living waters (Genesis 2:9-10).
3. The Bridegroom reigns (Genesis 2:15.)
4. Bride eats forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-6). Some Jewish legends say the forbidden fruit was the grape. **The blood of the Savior is likened to wine. If this is so, the same fruit which cursed mankind later becomes its instrument of salvation.** [And note, the only fruit of which we are still commanded not to partake is the *fermented* juice of the grape.]
5. The Bride must be cast out to die. Eve's yielding to the temptations of the serpent resulted in her being cast out, coming under the bondage of death, losing oneness with Adam (Moses 4:9-10). **When we understand that in this level of meaning, Eve represented all of God's people, it removes any reflection against women in particular!**
6. The Bridegroom's taking upon Himself Eve's sin, in order to redeem His bride, is a **witness of the future Christ, the true Bridegroom who would Himself take on our guilt in order to redeem us!**
 - a. This also explains Eve's concern that Adam would be left "a lone man" in the Garden of Eden. If all mankind fell, Jehovah would have been the only one of the Father's offspring to remain in His Presence. He thus acted to save all of His brethren.
7. A covering is provided for nakedness (Genesis 3:21). Jehovah provided coats of skin to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. **When He would come as Messiah in the flesh, He would provide the true covering --- the atonement.** (The Hebrew word translated as "atonement" had meaning of "a covering.") And it is a tradition in Jewish weddings for the bridegroom to wrap a part of his coat around his bride to cover her.
8. When Jesus returns, He will come again as a Bridegroom. He will unite Himself with His "Bride" (That is, **His faithful covenanted people**.)
9. He will then bring them into an inheritance of a new paradise, greater than Eden. All things, such as tree of life, fountain of living waters, etc., first established in Eden, will be restored, but to far greater dimensions. (See Revelation, Ch. 21-22.) And this time it is the serpent who will be cast out.

Understanding these three levels of meaning will help us reconcile the many apparent conflicts within the story of Adam and Eve.

IV. This interpretation is consistent with all Hebrew writings, which are known to have more than one level of symbolism, as do many other forms of literature, *which style was adopted from the Bible*.

A. While it is difficult at first to grasp there is more than one level of meaning to the scriptures in the Bible, **learning to read it that way will greatly enrich study of the Bible, for most of it is written in this same way.**

B. The Book of Mormon is a key source for helping us to understand the Bible. See, for example, 2 Nephi 11:4. “My soul delighted in proving unto my people the truth of the coming of Christ. ...and all things which have been given of God from the beginning of the world unto man are a typifying of him.”

C. Also see Mosiah 3:15, “And many... types and shadows showed he unto them, concerning his coming...”. See also “Jesus Christ, Types of” in the Bible’s Topical Guide and “Jesus Christ, Types and Shadows of,” *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*.

D. Elder Bruce R. McConkie verified that seeking the scriptures with the desire to understand those witnesses of Christ given in symbols, similitudes, or types and shadows, is a worthy search. And it is necessary for a complete understanding.

“No doubt there are many events in the lives of many prophets that set those righteous persons apart as types and shadows of their Messiah. It is wholesome and proper to look for similitudes of Christ everywhere and to use them repeatedly in keeping him and his laws uppermost in our minds.” (*The Promised Messiah*, p. 453.)

V. It is true that we needed to come into mortality that we might know the Good from the Evil.

A. Sometimes I felt there was something not quite right when we are told “The Fall” was a good thing, because that way men could “know by their own experience the good from the evil.”

For, I thought, we must have already recognized good was better than evil when we chose to follow the Savior and not Lucifer in the pre-mortal existence.

But I have come to see how shortsighted my understanding was.

B. The purpose of the Fall and our Mortality was indeed that by our own experience we might know Good from Evil. But its purpose was higher than that. **It was that we might know – The Greatest Good as opposed to the Greatest Evil.**

The Greatest Evil would be manifest not only here on earth in the terrible wars, bondages, addictions, molestations, and depravity all around us, but in the knowledge that such an evil power could control all mankind for all Eternity.

But the Greatest Good would be known because Gods, Father and Son, would give all that was most precious to them to save men from such Evil. The Father would give His Most Beloved Son. The Son would give His total obedience; subjecting Himself to unimaginable depths of soul-agony and body-pain, to redeem men from their sins: His flesh to be literally stripped from Him with whip, that He might cover the sins of others: His body to be repeatedly pierced and humiliatingly hanged, but as promise He would lift all men up, if they but had Faith in Him.

And He suffered all these things in silence: never railing; only forgiving.

Yes, The Fall was a good thing: Through it we truly can see that vast chasm between the Deepest Pits of Evil --- and the Greatest Heights of Good.

The Father sent His Son to reveal that Greatest Good.

And so we indeed have great cause to rejoice, and to Love—Him and Each Other!