

Ir-ot-04
Gospel Doctrine 2010
Old Testament, Lesson # 4
“Because of My Transgressions My Eyes are Opened

I. Discussion Question: Was “The Fall,” or becoming mortal and leaving God’s presence a great tragedy, as many believe, or a necessary part of our Eternal progression?

A. Illustration: Use illustration of 3 pillars from manual and quotation from Elder McConkie.

B. Scripture Support: 2 Nephi 2: 25 says “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.”

1. **Discussion Question:** Is it likely that *earthly* joy was the main purpose of the Fall? Or is it likely that *Eternal Joy* is the greater joy meant?

2. Follow-up Question? What scriptural evidences are there that Eternal Joy is our main goal? (See 2 Nephi 2:26-8; & Moses 5:9-11, etc.)

II. Discussion Question: Is it really possible for anyone to understand a need for a redeemer if they first do not understand The Fall and its consequences?

A. During discussion, make sure class members realize that The Fall involved the loss of being in the awesome and loving presence of God which would have included great spiritual riches. Mortality is totally “barren” in contrast.

B. Also make certain they know that if we were not redeemed from the Fall, we would have become captive to the Devil. (See 2 Nephi 2:29) and we would never have been resurrected, our bodies and spirits reunited.

Quote: Summarize with quote by Ezra Taft Benson in manual, p. 14.

III. Statement: 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:

A. The real events of the historical Adam and Eve, who opened mortality to us.

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

- a. Whatever Adam did, it was not a sin, but a transgression. (See Dallin Oaks quote, p. 15-16 of manual.)
- b. Joseph Fielding Smith shows Adam and Eve were not guilty of any moral sin, as many assume, pointing out they were married as husband and wife. (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:114-15.)
- c. Joseph Fielding Smith said of their acts, “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.)

1. Thus, Adam & Eve chose to eat, knowing they would fall, but eventually would receive greater blessings.

B. Adam and Eve also served as representatives of us, as individuals and as mankind, who would *all* sin, all being deceived by Satan at some time.

1. The name *Adam* means “many” or mankind. Understanding this level of meaning helps us understand God’s anger at sin in the story, and that we, through our sins, alienate ourselves from God and require a Redeemer.

C. Adam also represented Jesus Christ as a future Bridegroom who would take upon himself His *bride’s* guilt in order to redeem her. (Adam is a “figure of him who was to come.” See Romans 5:14.). We miss significant meaning if we do not understand the patterns in Adam which foreshadowed Jesus Christ.

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. “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 future role as Bridegroom. Then He continually reinforced that concept. In doing so, He revealed many significant aspects of His future work of salvation. When He came in the flesh, as Jesus Christ, He deliberately related many of His words and actions to the Bridegroom and to real wedding traditions. Interestingly, many of those traditions developed because the Israelites patterned their wedding customs after the covenant relationship they knew had been offered them by Jehovah.

D. Fuller Detail of How Adam’s Story taught of Christ and His people [Bride].

1. A paradise is created (Genesis 1:1-25).

2. 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.

6. 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). But when we know Eve represented *all* of God’s people, it removes any reflection against women in particular!

7. The Bridegroom takes upon Himself sin, in order to redeem His bride, as a future witness of Christ, the true Bridegroom who would take upon Himself our guilt in order to redeem us.

8. 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, that of the atonement.

(The Hebrew word translated as “atonement” had meaning of “a covering.”) It is a tradition in Jewish weddings for the bridegroom to wrap his coat around his bride.

9. When Jesus returns, He will come again as a Bridegroom. He will unite Himself with His Bride (His faithful covenanted people.)

10. 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.

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

IV. Jewish writings often have more than one level of symbolism, as do many other forms of literature. While it is difficult at first to grasp there is more than one level of meaning, learning to do so will greatly enrich our study of the scriptures, particularly the Old Testament.

V. 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.” 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*.

V. 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.)