

Lesson 4

“Because of My Transgression My Eyes Are Opened”

Purpose: To help understand that the Fall was a necessary part of Heavenly Father’s plan for us.



The Three Pillars of Eternity

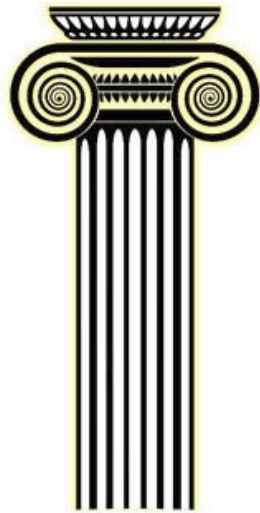
The plan of salvation is the “fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ” and is the means by which God accomplishes His purposes “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). Elder Bruce R. McConkie identified the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement as the “three pillars of eternity” and taught that understanding them lays the foundation for understanding the entire plan of salvation.

“God himself . . . ordained and established a plan of salvation whereby his spirit children might advance and progress and become like him. It is the gospel of God, the plan of Eternal Elohim, the system that saves and exalts, and it consists of three things. These three are the very pillars of eternity itself. They are the most important events that ever have or will occur in all eternity. They are the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement.

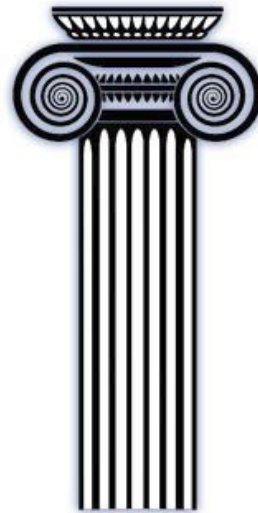
. . . We must know how and in what manner these three eternal verities—the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement—are inseparably woven together to form one plan of salvation. No one of them stands alone; each of them ties into the other two; and without a knowledge of all of them, it is not possible to know the truth about any one of them. “

Jared T. Parker, “Christ and the Three Pillars of Eternity,” in *Selections from the Religious Education Student Symposium 2003* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2003), 147–165.

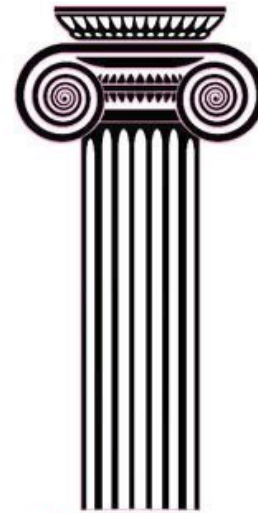
The Three Pillars of Eternity



Creation



Fall



Atonement

<http://mormoninsights.byu.edu/en/three-pillars-eternity-creation-fall-atonement/>

We spoke about the Creation last week, we are talking about the Fall today and we are always talking about the Atonement.

What is the interrelationship and connection between the Three Pillars of Eternity – The Creation, The Fall and The Atonement?

The three pillars of eternity—the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement—are critical parts of the plan of salvation. The plan’s central figure is Christ, who since premortality, during mortality, and throughout all eternity, seeks to redeem and save all His creations. With new insight, we appreciate the content and sequence of Moroni’s teachings concerning these truths.

Mormon 9:11-14

11 But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are.

12 Behold, he created Adam, and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man.

13 And because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord; yea, this is wherein all men are redeemed, because the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep, from which sleep all men shall be awakened by the power of God when the trump shall sound; and they shall come forth, both small and great, and all shall stand before his bar, being redeemed and loosed from this eternal band of death, which death is a temporal death.

14 And then cometh the judgment of the Holy One upon them; and then cometh the time that he that is filthy shall be filthy still; and he that is righteous shall be righteous still; he that is happy shall be happy.

Transgression vs. Sin – Is There a Difference

Transgression

an act that goes against a law, rule, or code of conduct; an offense.

Sin

an immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law.

Joseph Smith taught that it (the Fall) was not a “sin,” because God had decreed it. Brigham Young declared, “We should never blame Mother Eve, not the least.” 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!”

(“The Great Plan of Happiness”, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, October 1993)

This suggested contrast between a sin and a transgression reminds us of the careful wording in the second article of faith: “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam’s transgression. It also echoes a familiar distinction in the law. Some acts, like murder, are crimes because they are inherently wrong. Other acts, like operating a vehicle without a license, are crimes only because they are legally prohibited. Under these distinctions, the act that produced the Fall was not a sin—inherently wrong—but a transgression—wrong because it was formally prohibited. These words are not always used to denote something different, but this distinction seems meaningful in the circumstances of the Fall.

“The Great Plan of Happiness”, Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, October 1993

What do we know about the location of the Garden of Eden?

We must remember that the whole earth was paradisiacal before the Fall. The Garden of Eden was a center place. After the Fall, there was no Garden of Eden or paradisiacal status on earth. Yet relative to the locale of the site of the Garden of Eden, the Prophet Joseph Smith learned through revelation (D&C 57) that Jackson County was the location of a Zion to be and the New Jerusalem to come. The Prophet first visited Jackson County, Missouri, in the summer of 1831. The Prophet visited Jackson County again in April and May 1832. On one of the occasions, or perhaps both, the Prophet Joseph apparently instructed his close associates, and perhaps even a general Church gathering, that the ancient Garden of Eden was also located in Jackson County.

“What do we know about the location of the Garden of Eden?” , Bruce A. Van Orden, associate professor of Church history, Brigham Young University. Ensign, January 1994

What do we know about the location of the Garden of Eden?

It wasn't until May 1838 that revelation (D&C 116) identified Adam-ondi-Ahman, a site near the Garden of Eden, to be in Daviess County, Missouri, some seventy miles from present-day Kansas City.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "In accord with the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, we teach that the Garden of Eden was on the American continent located where the City of Zion, or the New Jerusalem, will be built. When Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden, they eventually dwelt at a place called Adam-ondi-Ahman, situated in what is now Daviess County, Missouri. ... We are committed to the fact that Adam dwelt on [the] American continent."

"What do we know about the location of the Garden of Eden?" , Bruce A. Van Orden, associate professor of Church history, Brigham Young University. Ensign, January 1994

The Choice That Began Mortality: Setting the Stage

- In the Great Council, Lucifer promised the impossible, to “redeem all mankind,” and demanded the Father’s “honor”.
 - Jesus Christ was the Father’s “Beloved and Chosen from the beginning” and promised to enact the Father’s plan.
 - We exercised our agency and chose to follow the Savior.
 - Lucifer was cast down to Earth with the 1/3 of the spirits and lost their First Estate (would not receive a body).
- God the Father was the mastermind of the Creation, the Fall and the Atonement. Through His Son, He created the earth and the Garden of Eden.
 - Adam was the first man, the premortal Michael, “who helped create the earth—a glorious, superb individual. Eve was his equal—a full, powerfully contributing partner.”
 - Adam and Eve were placed in a garden, Adam being “formed from the dust of the ground” and Eve being created from his side, and they became husband and wife.
- The Father commanded Adam and Even to
 - multiply and replenish the earth and
 - not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,
 - but added, “Nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but, remember that I forbid it, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”.

“The Choice That Began Mortality”, Elder Jess L. Christensen, Area Authority Seventy, Ensign, January 2002

The Choice That Began Mortality: Choices and Consequences

- Lucifer, “sought to destroy the agency of man, ... [and being] the father of all lies”, entered the garden to deceive our first parents.
 - He first talked with Adam, but Adam did not yield.
 - Lucifer then tried “also to beguile Eve”. He questioned her: “Yea, hath God said—Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”
 - Eve stood firm.
- “Ye shall not surely die,” protested Lucifer, directly contradicting the word of the Lord.
 - “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”.
 - Lucifer spoke a partial truth mixed with a falsehood.
 - If Eve were to partake of the fruit, her eyes would indeed be opened “as gods” and she would begin to know good and evil; yet the notion that eating the fruit could immediately make Eve as the gods was a clever deception.
 - The purpose of life can be fulfilled only when we have time to prepare to meet God and learn good and evil by our own experience.
- At Lucifer’s suggestion, Eve began to notice that the forbidden fruit was good for food, or delicious, and pleasant to the eyes.
 - Lucifer “knows well how to catch the eye and arouse the desire of the customer.”
 - Eve then chose to partake of the forbidden fruit.
 - She subsequently encouraged Adam to partake.
 - Adam concluded that God’s command to remain with Eve was more important than His command to abstain from the fruit.
 - Using his agency and making this choice, “Adam fell that men might be”.

“The Choice That Began Mortality”, Elder Jess L. Christensen, Area Authority Seventy, Ensign, January 2002

The Choice That Began Mortality: Choices and Consequences

Their choices, like ours, were not without consequences. Lucifer's power to "bruise [the] heel" of the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, would be fleeting, for the Savior would have power to "bruise [his] head". Just as light banishes darkness, the Savior will overcome Lucifer, and by His power we may also overcome. For Eve, the Lord would "greatly multiply [her] sorrow and [her] conception. In sorrow [meaning labor or pain, she would] bring forth children". "By divine design," she would be a mother and would be "primarily responsible for the nurture of their children."

For Adam, the ground would be "cursed ... for [his] sake." It would bring forth "thorns also, and thistles," and "by the sweat of [his] face [he would eat] bread". "By divine design, fathers ... are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. ... Fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners."

Adam and Eve were then banished from this most beautiful of gardens, and mortality. However, they were taught concerning the plan of God and given commandments. They did not leave without protection and promises, for God provided them with "coats of skins" to cover their nakedness. These coverings represent the protection—both spiritual and physical—that we can enjoy as we follow our Father's teachings.

When Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden and found themselves outside of God's presence, they were anxious to return. They used their agency to call upon the name of the Lord, to worship the Lord their God by offering sacrifices, and to bless His name.

"The Choice That Began Mortality", Elder Jess L. Christensen, Area Authority Seventy, Ensign, January 2002

The Choice That Began Mortality: The Fall and the Atonement

Three of the most essential events in the history of mankind are the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. “The enabling essence of the plan of salvation is the atonement of Jesus Christ,” said Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “We should try to comprehend the meaning of the Atonement. Before we can comprehend it, though, we must understand the fall of Adam.” As Latter-day Saints, we believe that Adam and Eve’s choice to partake of the forbidden fruit was ultimately a good thing—an essential act for our growth.

President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) taught: “When Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, they did not have to die. They could have been there to this day. They could have continued on for countless ages. There was no death then. But it would have been a terrific calamity if they had refrained from taking the fruit of that tree, for they would have stayed in the Garden of Eden and we would not be here; nobody would be here except Adam and Eve. So Adam and Eve partook.”

“The Choice That Began Mortality”, Elder Jess L. Christensen, Area Authority Seventy, Ensign, January 2002

The Choice That Began Mortality: The Fall and Joy

Without the Fall, we would not experience birth, pain, sorrow, sickness, health, joy, love, and death—in other words, we could never find eternal happiness. And without the great atoning sacrifice of our Savior, we would never be able to overcome death or have the privilege of repenting for the remission of our sins. Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to return to the Father and find exaltation with our families. He is our Savior, our friend, our Spiritual Father through the Atonement, our Redeemer from the Fall, our very life and light, and the living Son of our living Father in Heaven.

An understanding of the choice that began mortality is crucial to understanding the Father's glorious plan. We who chose in the Great Council to follow the Savior will be greatly blessed if we choose to do what is right and wisely use the agency we have been given.

"The Choice That Began Mortality", Elder Jess L. Christensen, Area Authority Seventy, Ensign, January 2002