

## OT LESSON #4

# "BECAUSE OF MY TRANSGRESSION MY EYES ARE OPENED"

by Ted L. Gibbons

**INTRODUCTION:** At least three commandments were given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We mentioned them last week. They were to 1) multiply and replenish the earth; 2) not eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil; and 3) stay together. Only one of those commandments has been reported to us in a conditional context. Of the forbidden fruit the Lord said,

And I, the Lord God, commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, 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.  
(Moses 3:16,17)

"Nevertheless, thou mayest choose . . ." When it became clear that one commandment must be broken to keep the other two, this was the one the first family elected to break.

A correct response to the challenges of incompatible commandments was necessary for Adam and Eve to prepare for their exaltation. The fall, precipitated by the partaking of the forbidden fruit, was one of what Elder McConkie called the "three pillars of eternity." (see *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 81) Those pillars are the creation, the fall, and the atonement. The central significance of these pillars is illustrated clearly by the teaching of Ammon to Lamoni and of Aaron to Lamoni's father (Alma 18:26-39; Alma 22:12-14).

## 1. THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE AND ITS EFFECTS ON THEM AND US

The Lord clearly intended that Adam and Eve should partake of the tree of knowledge, but he also intended that they should be responsible for the consequences. Thus, to paraphrase Moses 3:17, *If you want to live forever, don't eat the fruit of this tree. However, it is your tree and you can choose, but if you*

*eat the fruit, you will bring death into the world. If that happens you must remember that I forbade it. Responsibility for the consequences will be yours and your alone.*

*The following from Dan Ludlow has been helpful to me:*

Sometimes it helps to understand a religious question if we ask ourselves, How else could our Heavenly Father have done this? For example, how else could our Heavenly Father have brought about the necessary conditions that resulted from the fall of Adam and Eve? Following are four possibilities, and the only acceptable one is the one followed by the Lord:

1. What if the Lord had created the world in such a way that evil and sin would have been here from the beginning? In this case, God would be responsible for all sin and evil.
2. What if God had created the world in such a way that we never could commit any sin? In other words, what if he had never given us any law? It is true that in such a condition we never could have broken a law (committed sin), and thus there would have been no evil, no pain, or no disease. But if there is no possibility for sin and for the punishment and misery that accompany it, then there is no possibility for good and for the blessings and joy that follow obedience to law. None of us would want that type of world.
3. What if God had created a world where he would give us law (the opportunity of choice) but would not give us free agency (the freedom of choice)? How could there be any real growth in this situation? What development is there if we do things only because we have to do them? Also, how could a just God hold us responsible for our acts if we had no choice in the matter?
4. The other major possibility is the one the Lord followed. He created a world that was without sin or evil, and he placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in a state of innocence. He then gave law (the opportunity of choice) to Adam and Eve, and he also gave them their

free agency (the freedom of choice). Then, and this is a very important point, he did not hold Adam and Eve responsible for any transgression they committed in their state of innocence.

God knew before the earth was ever created that it would be necessary for Adam and Eve to fall so they "would have seed." Thus, even before the earth was created, Jesus Christ had agreed that he would pay the penalty required by the law of justice for the transgression of the law that resulted in the fall of Adam and Eve. The scriptures refer to the Savior as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8), and they indicate that Jesus Christ had agreed to bring about the atonement before the earth was ever created (1 Pet. 1:19–20; Eph. 1:4; Moses 5:57; D&C 121:32; Mosiah 18:13; Ether 3:14). (Daniel H. Ludlow, "Q&A: Questions and Answers," New Era, Sept. 1973, 14)

Notice what Lucifer said to Eve:

And he said unto the woman: Yea, hath God said--Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (And he spake by the mouth of the serpent.) (Moses 4:7)

So far as we know, only one thing in the garden was forbidden to Adam and his wife. Lucifer took Eve's attention to that one thing. There were 876 trees (more or less) in the garden and they could eat of any or all of them, except that one, and the devil focused Eve's attention exactly there. As he always will. One of his ways to get into our hearts and minds is to point out the things we cannot do. *Are there any movies you should not go to? Are there words you should not say? Are there things you should not do?* When Eve responded by indicating the forbidden tree and the consequences of touching or eating therefrom,

the serpent said unto the woman: Ye shall not surely die; 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. (Moses 4:10,11) his accusation that God's intent is to keep Adam and Eve blind (*he doesn't want your eyes opened*) and captive (*ye shall be as gods*) is most interesting given the content of Moses 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. (Emphasis added)

We would do well to focus our attention on the things we can do: “of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat . . .” (Moses 3:16) rather than centering our attention on the things that are forbidden.

What changes came as a result of the fall? Both Adam and Eve have left us their testimony of the blessings that came to them because they partook.

And in that day [the day an angel taught Adam and Eve of the atonement and they received the Holy Ghost] 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. And Eve, his wife, heard all these things and was glad, saying: 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 5:10,11)

Look at the list of blessings:

1. My eyes are opened
2. I can have joy in this life
3. I can be resurrected and return to the presence of God
4. We can have children
5. We know the difference between good and evil
6. We can know the joy of redemption
7. We can obtain eternal life

*Lehi, who was probably paraphrasing the Moses 5:10,11 passage from the brass plates, explained what would have happened if they had not chosen to eat the forbidden fruit.*

And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have

fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end. And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. (2 Nephi 2:22,23)

*The fall had other results as well.*

- A. The earth fell. "When the earth was framed and brought into existence and man was placed upon it, it was near the throne of our Father in heaven. And when man fell--though that was designed in the economy, there was nothing about it mysterious or unknown to the Gods, they understood it all, it was all planned--but when man fell, the earth fell into space, and took up its abode in this planetary system, and the sun became our light." (Journal of Discourses, Vol.17, p.144, Brigham Young, July 19, 1874)
- B. Fear, embarrassment, a desire to hide from God (Moses 4:14-16)
- C. Enmity of Christ and Satan (Moses4:21; Gen 3:15; Chap. Head, Gen 3)
- D. Sorrow for the man and the woman (Moses 4:23,25)
- E. Death of men (Moses 4:15)
- F. Death of animals (Moses 4:27)
- G. Men became as God, knowing good and evil (Moses 4:28)
- H. Expulsion from the Garden (Moses 4:29)
- I. Cut off from the tree of life (Moses 4:31)
- J. The ground is cursed

Satan's intent in his temptation of Eve and Adam was to "destroy the world."

(Moses 4:6) What connection is there between the forbidden fruit and this objective? What exactly Satan had in mind we do not know, but the response of the Father to the transgression of Adam and Eve is perfectly clear. He

drove out the man, and . . . 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. (Moses 4:31)

Why?

And now behold, I say unto you that if it had been possible for Adam to have partaken of the fruit of the tree of life at that time, there would have been no death, and the word would have been void, making God a liar, for he said: If thou eat thou shalt surely die. (Alma 12:23)

The angel with the flaming sword was not a hood ornament. His assignment must have been to keep Adam and Eve away from the tree even at the cost of their lives. Why?

And now behold, if it were possible that our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life they would have been forever miserable, having no preparatory state; and thus the plan of redemption would have been frustrated, and the word of God would have been void, taking none effect. (Alma 12:7)

## **2, THE ATONEMENT OF JESUS CHRIST SAVES US FROM PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL DEATH.**

Note the new commandments given to our first parents in Moses 5:5.

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.

For us, the sacrifice commanded by God is beautiful symbolism of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The context of this commandment and its explanation makes it

clear that Adam and Eve were to learn obedience even before they learned about the atonement. They offered sacrifice because they had been told to, without understanding the meaning. When an angel, "after many days" asked Adam why he was killing baby animals, he replied, ":I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (Moses 5:6)

That lesson is worth a note here. Not everything God asks us to do will make sense to us. His perspective is different from ours.

THUS saith the Lord your God, even Jesus Christ, the Great I AM, Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made . . . (D&C 38:1)

His ability to see the future, combined with his love for us will occasionally (frequently?) cause him to ask us to do things whose purpose is indiscernible. Remember the profound insight from Isaiah regarding this?

For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8,9)

I have a relative who is a superb linguist. His senior year in high school he took national language tests in French, German, and Spanish and finished in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in all three. At the same time he was studying, on his own, Norwegian, Hebrew, and Icelandic. He was the Sterling Scholar in Language Arts for the his home state.

His mission call was to England. In four years at the Missionary Training Center I watched hundreds of missionaries struggle with the Portuguese language. This young man could have learned it during lunch. Why send him to England? It doesn't seem to make any sense. But then, it doesn't need to make sense.

We have all made the covenant of obedience as we partake of the sacrament and at other times. That covenant contains no conditional clauses about things making sense or about our right to understand the reasons behind every

requirement. We said we would obey and we should. When the time comes, we pack our bags and go to England.

But to return to the issue of the sacrifice required of Adam. When the Lord was satisfied that Adam would keep the commandments, he taught him the greatest lesson of all:

This thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth. 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 5:7,8)

When the Holy Ghost then fell upon Adam, he learned of the power and reach of the "sacrifice of the Only Begotten:

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. (Moses 5:9)

What an explosion of Joy must have followed that announcement: "as thou hast fallen thou mayest be redeemed . . ." Moses 5:10,11 are a reflection of that joy.

### **3. ADAM AND EVE BEGIN LIFE AS MORTALS, BEAR CHILDREN, TEACH THEM THE GOSPEL, AND WORSHIP AND OBEY GOD.**

What four things did Adam and Eve begin to do as they departed from the Garden?

1. They worked and tilled the earth (Moses 5:1)
2. They had children and then grandchildren (Moses 5:2,3)
3. They prayed and began to call upon the name of the Lord (Moses 5:4)
4. They taught their children (Moses 5:12)

How important are these four activities in mortal life? Are there other, more important endeavors that Moses overlooked in writing this account? I think we could not be far from the truth in saying that these concerns constitute the basic duties of obedient mortal life.



**CONCLUSION:** The Savior makes it possible for us to return to the presence of God, but Adam and Eve made it possible for us to come here to partake of mortality and to be tested and prepared for that return. Does any one doubt that we were watching breathlessly through the veil while Eve and then Adam considered the fruit? What a cheer must have echoed through heaven when they both partook and opened the gate to what Eve called "the joy of our redemption, and the eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient." (Moses 5:11) We ought to give thanks for them and for the gift they have given to their posterity.

Copyright © 2002 by Ted Gibbons <tedgibbons@yahoo.com>. All rights reserved. No part of this text may be reproduced in any form or by any means for commercial gain without the express written consent of the author. Digital or printed copies may be freely made and distributed for personal and public non-commercial use.