

MOSES 4; GENESIS 3

THE FALL

Overview

After a rapid sweep across the vast panorama of the Creation and the Garden of Eden in Moses 2–3, the scope narrows in Moses 4 and the story slows to a more measured pace—and with good reason, for it is at this point that the *purpose* of Creation begins to unfold. In the story of the Fall, we learn that the importance of the innocent choice made in Eden—and of moral choices we make on a daily basis—outweighs, in the eyes of God, the importance of the rest of Creation.¹ Of course, reflecting on the lessons of the Fall is meant not to drag us down into guilt but rather to encourage us to use the gift of moral agency wisely. As President Russell M. Nelson has said, “Nothing is more liberating, more ennobling, or more crucial to our individual progression than is a regular, daily focus on repentance.”²

For some Christians, the Fall was a tragedy that brought original sin upon Adam and Eve and all their posterity. However, for Latter-day Saints, the events that brought opposition into the world (see 2 Nephi 2:11) came through the exercise of choice and were, in fact, a “necessary evil.”³ The second article of faith teaches that sin is an individual responsibility, not the result of evil forces beyond our control. According to scripture, the purpose of earth life is to “prove” all people “to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them” (Abraham 3:25).

¹ John Henry Newman, *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans in Catholic Considered in Twelve Lectures addressed in 1850 to the Party of the Religious Movement of 1833*, vol. 2 (London, England: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876), 1:240.

² Russell M. Nelson “We Can Do Better and Be Better,” *Ensign*, May 2019, 67.

³ See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Ronan J. Head, “Mormonism’s Satan and the Tree of Life,” *Element: A Journal of Mormon Philosophy and Theology* 4, no. 2 (2008): 1–52, especially 1–3.

The enabling grace and power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ provides the means to overcome sin and death and opens the way for human salvation and exaltation (see 2 Nephi 25:23). The test given by our temporary earthly probation requires a fallen world, one that the devil himself helped institute through his temptation in the Garden of Eden. In this chapter we will see how Satan, in his efforts to thwart Adam and Eve’s progression, unknowingly advanced God’s own plan.

Happily, Latter-day Saints like many fellow Christians know that the story of the Fall “is not an account of sin alone but a drama about becoming a being who fully reflects God’s very own image. Genesis is not only about the origins of sin; it is also about the foundations of human perfection. The work that God has begun in creation, he will bring to completion.”⁴ As we will see in chapters 5–8, the book of Moses follows the story of the Fall with the story of how “the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God, and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam, by an holy ordinance” (Moses 5:58–59).

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4; Genesis 3

Moses 4:1–2. Satan Opposes Jehovah in the Premortal Council

4:1. “here am I, send me.” BYU professors Richard Draper, Kent Brown, and Michael Rhodes noted that the Jewish meaning of this statement is “that the speaker is in the right path, ready to do the Lord’s bidding.”⁵ However, when Satan said, “Here am I, send me” (verse 1), his intentions were clearly in direct opposition to God’s. This means that his words were false in spirit—demonstrating that the devil was “a liar from the beginning” (Doctrine and Covenants 93:25).

In addition, since Jesus Christ was already known by all to be God’s “Beloved and Chosen from the beginning” (Moses 4:2), the fact that Satan sought to answer the call was itself a direct challenge to the Father. BYU professor Brent Top correctly concluded that “the Father’s question ‘Whom shall I send?’ was . . .

⁴ Gary A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 8. See also Moses 1:39.

⁵ Richard D. Draper, S. Kent Brown, and Michael D. Rhodes, *The Pearl of Great Price: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005), 38; compare Genesis 22:1; Isaiah 6:8; Acts 9:10; Abraham 3:27.

a call for our commitment and common consent rather than a request for résumés.”⁶ Note also that Satan’s self-centeredness is fittingly reflected in the wording of his proposal. With passionate rapid-fire delivery, he repeats the pronouns *I* and *me* six times in the short span of half a verse.

4:1. “I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost.” Joseph Smith clarified this frequently misunderstood statement in one of his discourses. William Clayton, in his rough notes of the discourse, recorded, “The contention in Heaven was—Jesus said there would be certain souls that would not be saved; and the Devil said he could save them all.”⁷ In comparing William Clayton’s notes with those of others who heard Joseph Smith’s discourse, additional details make it clear that the “contention in Heaven” was *not* about whether ordinary souls could make it to heaven if they were forced to be obedient in all things, as Latter-day Saints sometimes mistakenly teach. Rather, the contention in heaven had to do with Satan falsely claiming that he could save *even those who would commit the unpardonable sin*. According to George Laub’s notes, Joseph Smith said that Satan “boasted of himself saying, ‘Send me, I can save all, *even those who sinned against the Holy Ghost*.’”⁸ Contradicting Satan’s boast, Jesus Christ said he would “save all *except the sons of perdition*.”⁹ In other words, Jesus knew that through the gift of His Atonement, everyone *but* the sons of perdition could be “resurrected to [at least] a telestial glory, escaping the second, spiritual death.”¹⁰

These statements raise a question: what must a person do to commit the unpardonable sin? The Church does *not* teach that an “individual who receives a witness of the Holy Ghost and then falls away or becomes less active in the Church is . . . guilty of the unpardonable sin.”¹¹ Rather, Joseph Smith taught that such a person “must receive the Holy Ghost, have the heavens opened unto him, and know God, and then sin against him.”¹² Thus, the kind of knowledge against which such persons tragically rebel is so sure and certain that very few mortals will ever qualify in this life to become sons of perdition. None

6 Brent L. Top, *The Life Before: How Our Premortal Existence Affects Our Mortal Life* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1988), 109.

7 Joseph Smith Jr., April 7, 1844, in Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1969), 357.

8 Eugene England, “George Laub’s Nauvoo Journal,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 172; emphasis added and spelling and punctuation modernized.

9 Wilford Woodruff Journal, April 7, 1844, in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, comps. and eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 347; emphasis added and spelling and punctuation standardized.

10 Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1978), 271–275.

11 *Book of Mormon Seminary Teacher Manual* (Salt Lake City, UT: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2017), <https://churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/book-of-mormon-seminary-teacher-manual-2017/introduction-to-the-book-of-alma/lesson-96-alma-39>.

12 Joseph Smith Jr., in *History of the Church* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1978), 6:314.

of us should worry that we have committed the unpardonable sin and are beyond the reach of forgiveness through Christ's Atonement.

In short, Joseph Smith understood that when Satan proposed to "save all," he was not thinking broadly, as Jesus did, about how to help all of God's children attain a kingdom of glory but rather seems to have been focused on a narrow, selfish, and farfetched proposal whose stated objective was to "save" the sons of perdition. In trying to do away with the need for the Atonement, Satan sought "to redeem . . . all in their sins."¹³ Of course, this impossible option would have been most appealing to those spirits who mistakenly thought they might benefit from it—namely, those who were already leaning toward the unpardonable sin, including, of course, Satan himself.

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:1–4

Moses 4:3–4. Satan Rebels and Is Cast Down

4:3. "Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man." Latter-day Saints sometimes mistakenly assume that when Satan "sought to destroy the agency of man" his plan was to "save" all people by forcing them to obey the Father's law. Yet, Elder Dallin H. Oaks has taught that though it is possible for our *freedom* to be curtailed, "no person or organization can take away our *free agency*."¹⁴ For this reason, the idea that Satan was proposing forced obedience, an idea that has no other basis in scripture, seems unlikely. Besides its logical impossibility, it is difficult to imagine that the devil could have won followers for such an unworkable plan. Thus we wonder: could there be something other than forced obedience behind Satan's plan to destroy the agency of humankind?

Our best clues to another option might be found in the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. To begin with, we might presume that his deception of Adam and Eve in the garden was an attempt to continue on earth, insofar as possible, the same strategy Satan had proposed in heaven. For example, might we see the his efforts in heaven to destroy the agency of humankind and to "save" us in our sins

¹³ Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London, England: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1854–1886), 21:288.

¹⁴ Dallin H. Oaks, "Free Agency and Freedom" (Brigham Young University fireside, October 11, 1987), speeches.byu.edu; emphasis added.

as something he would have liked to put into motion on earth by getting Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of life immediately after eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge?

Alma gave us a hint of the danger of this possibility when he explained, “For behold, if Adam had put forth his hand immediately, and partaken of the tree of life, he would have lived forever, according to the word of God, having no space for repentance; yea, and also the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated” (Alma 42:5; compare Alma 12:26). Had this action been allowed, there would have been no “probationary time” (Alma 42:4)—hence no opportunity to exercise agency—before the spirits of Adam and Eve were forever united with an immortal body (see Alma 12:21–27; Doctrine and Covenants 132:19). In short, if Adam and Eve had taken the fruit of the tree of life immediately after having eaten from the tree of knowledge, they would have been “forever miserable,” having become immortal in their fallen state (Alma 12:26). Satan’s objectives to “save” Adam and Eve “in their sins” and to “destroy their agency” would have been achieved.

4:3. “I caused that he should be cast down.” Although Moses 4:6 and Abraham 3:28 say only that “many” followed Satan, Doctrine and Covenants 29:35, like Revelation 12:4, is more specific: the Lord said that Satan persuaded “a third part of the hosts of heaven.” However, the phrase “a third part” in scripture usually seems to describe a rough qualitative division between three different groups rather than a precise, mathematically calculated total. It seems possible that the fraction was not anything near 33.3 percent of all God’s children.

4:4. “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.” This brilliant description is an “announcement of plot”¹⁵ for what will follow in the account of the Fall: Satan will lie to Eve in order to *deceive* her; her eyes will not suddenly be opened with the wisdom he promised, but rather she will become *blind* to her true situation; and she and Adam will be figuratively *led captive* in a vain effort to hide their transgression. All this because they did not *hearken* to (= obey) the voice of the Lord.

Source

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Related verses

Moses 4:3–4

¹⁵ This is in the spirit of similar announcements of plot in Genesis that are brilliantly described in Laurence A. Turner, *Announcements of Plot in Genesis* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990).

Moses 4:5–12; Genesis 3:1–6. Transgression of Eve

4:5; 3:1. “the serpent was . . . subtle.” In this context, the Hebrew term for “subtle” has to do with the ability to make something appear one way when it is actually another. For example, note that the serpent is a symbol of Christ and His life-giving power.¹⁶ However, in the Garden of Eden Satan appears as a serpent, deceptively bringing death, not life. Explaining further, Richard Draper, Kent Brown, and Michael Rhodes explained that Satan “has effectively come as the Messiah, offering a promise that only the Messiah can offer, for it is the Messiah who will control the powers of life and death and can promise life, not Satan.”¹⁷ Not only has the devil come in guise of the Holy One, but he also seems to have deliberately appeared, without authorization, in a most sacred place. Since Jewish and early Christian traditions see the tree of knowledge as a symbol for the veil of the sanctuary,¹⁸ it appears that Satan has positioned himself, in extreme sacrilegious effrontery, as the very keeper of the gate. Thus, as BYU professor Catherine Thomas wrote, Eve was persuaded to take the fruit “from the wrong hand, having listened to the wrong voice.”¹⁹

4:9; 3:3. “tree . . . in the midst of the garden.” The vague reference to the tree paves the way for more confusion. Whereas the previous narrative explicitly disclosed to the reader only that the tree of life was in the “midst” (the translation of the Hebrew word for “center”) of the garden (Moses 3:9), Eve’s statement reveals that the tree of knowledge must have been located in the same general area.²⁰ While the devil—and the scripture reader—know that there are two special trees “in the midst” of the garden, only one of them seems now to be visible to Eve. Ancient traditions and modern scholarship suggest that this is because the tree of knowledge hides (that is, veils) her view of the tree of life.²¹ Satan will exploit this confusion to make the tree of knowledge appear to Eve as if it were the tree of life instead (see Moses 5:9–11).²²

4:10; 3:4. “Ye shall not surely die.” The Hebrew version of this difficult phrase has been misunderstood by some readers to mean that Satan was telling the truth, letting Eve know that the consequences of

16 See Numbers 21:8–9; John 3:14–15; 2 Nephi 25:20; Alma 33:19.

17 Richard D. Draper, S. Kent Brown, and Michael D. Rhodes, *The Pearl of Great Price: A Verse-by-Verse Commentary* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005), 43.

18 See St. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, trans. Sebastian Brock (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1990), hymn III:5, p. 92.

19 M. Catherine Thomas, “Women, Priesthood, and the At-one-ment,” in *Spiritual Lightening: How the Power of the Gospel Can Enlighten Minds and Lighten Burdens*, ed. M. Catherine Thomas (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1996), 53.

20 Thus, the *Zohar* says that the tree of knowledge was “not *precisely* in the middle” (Daniel C. Matt, trans., *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, vol. 1 [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004], 220n921, Be-Reshit 1:35a).

21 See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *In God’s Image and Likeness 1: Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve*, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Books, 2014), 252.

22 Margaret Barker, “Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?,” Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, accessed December 24, 2007, <http://orthodoxeurope.org/page/11/1/7.aspx>.

death in eating of the fruit would be only temporary. However, the repetition of the verb in the Hebrew text underlying the English translation (literally, “*dying*, ye shall not *die*”) is always used as a way of making the negation (“not”) even stronger. In other words, it changes the meaning “you shall *not* die” to something like “you shall *surely* not die” or “you shall *absolutely not* die.” With this correct understanding of the Hebrew, we can see that Satan’s deceptive statement is completely false.

4:11; 3:5. “*ye shall be as gods.*” It was true that through the fruit Adam and Eve would begin to acquire an attribute of discernment possessed by God Himself. However, the devil’s claim is at best a deceptive half-truth because it falsely implies that the couple would attain godhood through the mere act of eating the fruit. In reality, “partaking of the forbidden fruit was only the beginning of that process.”²³

4:12; 3:6. “*she took of the fruit.*” What was the nature of the forbidden fruit? Hugh Nibley concluded that since the tree was called the tree of knowledge, “knowledge is certainly more logical” as the object of temptation than would have been a piece of actual fruit. He further explained, “Satan disobeyed orders when he revealed certain secrets to Adam and Eve, not because they were not known and done in other worlds, but because he was not authorized in that time and place to convey them.” Although Satan had “given the fruit to Adam and Eve, it was not his prerogative to do so—regardless of what had been done in other worlds. (When the time comes for such fruit, it will be given us legitimately.)”²⁴

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:5–12; Genesis 3:1–6

Moses 4:12; Genesis 3:6. Transgression of Adam

“*gave unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*” BYU professor Shon Hopkin noted “the serpent’s success in getting Eve to partake of the fruit while alone, separate from Adam.” Of course, Hopkin also observed that Eve “is not the only culpable party in her aloneness; this reading of the story also implies that Adam was alone elsewhere in the Garden, making him complicit in the situation.”²⁵

²³ Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1989), 30.

²⁴ Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005), 311; Hugh W. Nibley, “Return to the Temple,” in *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 12 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1992), 63; Hugh W. Nibley, “Gifts,” in *Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 9 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1989), 92.

²⁵ Shon D. Hopkin, “Women, Eve, and the Mosaic Covenant: A Latter-day Saint Theological Reading,” in *Seek Ye Words of*

Hugh Nibley elaborated on the scene and its implications, observing that while Eve was the one beguiled, having innocently taken the fruit, she also became the first to correctly understand what must be done as a result of her and Adam’s transgression:

After Eve had eaten the fruit and Satan had won his round, the two were now drastically separated, for they were of different natures. But Eve, who in ancient lore is the one who outwits the serpent and trips him up with his own smartness, defeated this trick by a clever argument. First, she asked Adam if he intended to keep all of God’s commandments. Of course he did! All of them? Naturally! And what, pray, was the first and foremost of those commandments? Was it not to multiply and replenish the earth, the universal commandment given to all God’s creatures? And how could they keep that commandment if they were separated? It had undeniable priority over the commandment not to eat the fruit. So Adam could only admit that she was right and go along: “I see that it must be so,” he said, but it was she who made him see it. This is much more than a smart way of winning her point, however. It is the clear declaration that man and woman were put on the earth to stay together and have a family—that is their first obligation and must supersede everything else.²⁶

Eve’s perceptiveness, heightened by the experience she gained by eating the fruit, is recognized by a diversity of ancient traditions that associate her with Wisdom (Sophia). The wisdom she had begun to acquire will later be demonstrated through her insightful psalm of gratitude (Moses 5:10–11).

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:12; Genesis 3:6

Moses 4:13–14; Genesis 3:7–8. Aprons and Hiding

4:13; 3:7. “the eyes of them both were opened.” In other Old Testament verses, this phrase connotes a sudden vision of hidden things.²⁷ Note that in demonstration of her new capacity for discernment, Eve immediately “sees through Satan’s disguise of clever hypocrisy, identifies him, and exposes him for what he is.”²⁸

Wisdom: Studies of the Book of Mormon, Bible, and Temple in Honor of Stephen D. Ricks, ed. Donald W. Parry, Gaye Strathearn, and Shon D. Hopkin (Orem UT: Interpreter Foundation; Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Religious Education, 2020), 177–178.

²⁶ Hugh W. Nibley, “Patriarchy and Matriarchy,” in *Old Testament and Related Studies*, ed. John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 1 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1986), 88–89.

²⁷ See, for example, Genesis 21:19; Numbers 24:3–4; 2 Kings 6:17–20.

²⁸ Hugh W. Nibley, “Patriarchy and Matriarchy,” in *Old Testament and Related Studies*, ed. John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 1 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1986), 92–93.

4:13; 3:7. “fig leaves . . . aprons.” The fig tree, with its unusually large and strong leaves, is known for its abundance of seeds. Thus the aprons are an appropriate symbol for Adam and Eve’s ability to “be fruitful and multiply” after the Fall (Moses 2:28). In verse 27, God Himself will be the one to clothe Adam and Eve, whereas in verse 13 Adam and Eve “made *themselves* aprons” (emphasis added). Like their tasting of the forbidden fruit (in Moses 4:12), the action of making the aprons exemplifies the “recurring theme [in Genesis] . . . of the attempt and failure of human effort in obtaining a blessing that only God can give.”²⁹

It is perfectly in character for Satan to have planted the suggestion of making aprons since he often appropriates false signs of power and authority for himself in order to deceive.³⁰ This idea echoes the association in the Jewish *Zohar* (a thirteenth century theological and mystical text) of Adam and Eve’s fig leaves with a knowledge of “sorcery and magic,” false forms of protection and counterfeits of the true priesthood. Moreover, it is consistent with the plan of the adversary to encourage sinners to flee from the presence of God rather than to reconcile and return to Him (see 2 Nephi 32:8). Finally, the contrast between the false clothing made from leaves and the true clothing made from the skins of animals parallels the story of Cain and Abel, in which the former makes an unacceptable offering from the fruits of the ground while the latter follows the God-given pattern of animal sacrifice.

Note that this is Satan’s third attempt to mislead Adam and Eve by false appearances. First, he spoke in the guise of a serpent, deceptively employing a symbol of Christ. Second, he made claims that blurred the identities of the tree of knowledge and the tree of life. Finally, in the episode of the fig-leaf aprons, he suggested a course of action to Adam and Eve that substituted a self-made emblem of power and authority for the true article.

Ancient religious traditions support the idea that the apron takes on a positive meaning when worn as authorized by God. In both Egypt and Mesoamerica, foliated aprons were used as a sign of authority, and kings in the Near East were often described as various sorts of trees. Endowed Latter-day Saints understand that for themselves, like for Abraham, the blessings of kingship and queenship, priesthood, and posterity are inseparably entwined in the eternities.

4:14; 3:8. “in the cool of the day.” The phrase is better translated as “in the wind, breeze, spirit, or direction of the day”—in other words, the voice came from the west, the place where the sun sinks.³¹

29 John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 61.

30 See 2 Corinthians 11:12–15; 2 Nephi 9:9; Doctrine and Covenants 128:20; 129:4–7.

31 Meir Zlotowitz and Nosson Scherman, eds., *Bereishis/Genesis: A New Translation with a Commentary Anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and Rabbinic Sources*, 2nd ed., 2 vols., ArtScroll Tanach Series (Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah Publications, 1986), 1:122–123.

Since the voice came from the west, some ancient traditions inferred that Adam and Eve were located at that time on the border of the east “courtyard” of their paradisiacal “temple,” or the end of the garden furthest removed from the presence of the Lord. Thus, they seem figuratively to almost have one foot outside the garden already. The idea that Adam and Eve were in the “courtyard” of Eden is an appropriate fit to the function of the outermost of the three divisions of the Israelite temple as a place of confession—the first step of reconciliation.³²

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:13–14; Genesis 3:7–8

Moses 4:15–18; Genesis 3:9–12. Confession of Adam

4:15. “Where goest thou?”; 3:9. “Where art thou?” God’s call is not issued as an angry threat but rather as an invitation for Adam to account for his stewardship of the garden. Elder David A. Bednar observed that God did not simply lecture Adam but instead made every effort to help him learn and wisely exercise his agency.³³

4:18; 3:12. “the woman thou gavest.” Adam’s response to the Lord’s question is different in the book of Moses than in Genesis. In Genesis 3:12, Adam is reported as saying simply, “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” However, in Moses 4:18 Adam adds, “And commandest that she should remain with me.” The phrase provides a defensible rationale for his transgression: he took the forbidden fruit in order to remain with Eve, thus breaking one commandment in order to keep a prior and more important one.

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:15–18; Genesis 3:9–12

³² James L. Carroll, “The Reconciliation of Adam and Israelite Temples,” *Studia Antiqua* 3, no. 1 (Winter 2003): 96–99.

³³ David A. Bednar, “Seek Learning by Faith,” *Ensign*, September 2007, 63.

Moses 4:19; Genesis 3:13. Confession of Eve

“The serpent beguiled me.” In light of the Latter-day Saint understanding of the Fall as a necessary prerequisite for humankind’s further progression and of their rejection of the generally negative portrayals of Eve in historical Christianity, Church members typically emphasize her perceptiveness and interpret her role as constructive. Unfortunately, some have taken this view to an extreme, not only rightfully clearing the innocent and pure Eve from accountability for her transgression and honoring her lifelong faithfulness, but in addition arguing that she was not actually beguiled by Satan in her decision to eat the forbidden fruit.

With respect to the mistaken idea that Eve was *not* beguiled, we have already seen that Satan mixed truth with falsehood in his statements to her. On the one hand, Satan told a part-truth in his assertion that Adam and Eve’s eyes would “be opened, and [they would] be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Moses 4:11). On the other hand, his claim that they would “not surely die” as the result of eating the fruit was a complete falsehood (Moses 4:10). All this is consistent with Brigham Young’s conclusion that Satan told Eve “many truths and some lies,”³⁴ or as Hyrum Andrus more specifically expressed it, “a big lie and . . . a half-truth.”³⁵ The Book of Mormon more than once prefaces discussions of Adam and Eve’s transgression by the statement that the devil is “the father of all lies”³⁶—implying that Eve was innocently misled by a lie. Perhaps the most telling of these passages is 2 Nephi 2:18. Here the word “wherefore” logically connects the first clause (which describes who Satan is) and the second clause (which tells what he said): “The devil, who is the father of all lies, *wherefore* [or, “for this reason”] he said: Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die, but shall be as God, knowing good and evil” (emphasis added).

In a different but equally mistaken interpretation, some readers admit that Satan “*sought* . . . to beguile Eve” (Moses 4:6; emphasis added) but go on to say the adversary did not actually *succeed* in deceiving her. They incorrectly conclude that the Hebrew term for “beguiled” does not mean that she was deceived. Unfortunately, the reasons given for this conclusion do not stand under close scrutiny.³⁷ Barry Bandstra’s detailed study of the Hebrew text of Genesis translates the relevant term in the context of the verse as “deceived,”³⁸ and even modern translations that don’t translate the term as “beguiled” or “deceived”

34 Brigham Young, December 1844, reported in Eugene England, “George Laub’s Nauvoo Journal,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 151–178.

35 Hyrum L. Andrus, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Pearl of Great Price*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2003), 156–157.

36 2 Nephi 2:18; Ether 8:25; compare 2 Nephi 9:9.

37 See Jeffrey M. Bradshaw and Book of Mormon Central Staff, “Essay #67: Moses Witnesses the Fall (Moses 4): Was Eve Beguiled? (Moses 4:5–12),” *Book of Moses Essays*, Interpreter Foundation, August 7, 2021, <https://interpreterfoundation.org/book-of-moses-essays-067/>.

38 Barry L. Bandstra, *Genesis 1–11: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 198.

retain the basic idea in Eve’s statement that the serpent successfully misled her in her innocence (for example, “the serpent *tricked* me”³⁹; “the serpent *duped* me”⁴⁰).

Of course, none of this means that Eve did not have some degree of insight into the positive consequences of her choice,⁴¹ nor does it assert that her understanding was not relatively complete *after* she had eaten and was able to identify Satan for who he was.⁴² However, the explicit declaration of scripture is clear: “Satan . . . sought to beguile Eve” (Moses 4:6). Ancient and modern Hebrew scholars agree that the primary meaning of *beguile* is “to deceive.” The actions of Adam and Eve in making the fig leaf aprons and hiding from God witness their doubtful state of mind following the transgression. There is no reason that Latter-day Saints should not accept Eve’s own straightforward explanation of what happened. In the admirable candor and simplicity of her confession, she both admitted the deception and rightfully laid blame on Satan—the only one who actually deserved it: “The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:19; Genesis 3:13

Moses 4:20–21; Genesis 3:14–15. A Curse for the Serpent

4:21; 3:15. “seed [of the woman] . . . shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Historically, Christians have called the prophecy in Moses 4:21 concerning the seed of the woman the *protoevangelium*: the first explicit biblical allusion to the good news of the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. To Christians, the imagery in this verse bears the happy tidings that the Redeemer will eventually crush the head of the serpent with the very heel that would be bruised in the pains of the Atonement. Furthermore, just as Jesus Christ will put all enemies beneath His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25–66), each person who will be saved must also, with Christ’s help, gain the power needed to “triumph over all

39 Ronald S. Hendel, “Genesis,” in *The HarperCollins Study Bible, Fully Revised and Updated*, ed. Harold W. Attridge et al., rev. ed. (New York, NY: HarperOne, 2006), 9, Genesis 3:13.

40 Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds., *The Jewish Study Bible, Featuring the Jewish Publication Society TANAKH Translation* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2004), 17, Genesis 3:13.

41 See, for example, Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1997), 202–205.

42 See, for example, Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan of Happiness,” October 1993 general conference, online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

[their] enemies and put them under [their] feet,”⁴³ possessing the “glory, authority, majesty, power and dominion which Jehovah possesses.”⁴⁴

The Islamic Qur’an records a passionate exchange of words following Lucifer’s expulsion from heaven that could just as easily fit the scene described here. In the account, Satan unleashes a tirade of threats, followed by his summary dismissal by God: “‘Because . . . [Thou hast adjudged me to be erring],’ [the Devil] declared, ‘I will waylay Your servants as they walk on Your straight path, then spring upon them from the front and the rear, from their right and from their left.’ . . . ‘Begone!’ [God] said.”⁴⁵ Hugh Nibley elaborated:

[Satan,] nettled by this rebuke and the curse, . . . flares up in his pride and announces what his program for the economic and political order of the new world is going to be. He will take the resources of the earth, and with precious metals as a medium of exchange he will buy up military and naval might, or rather those who control it, and so will govern the earth—for he is the prince of this world. He does rule: he is king. Here at the outset is the clearest possible statement of a military-industrial complex ruling the earth with violence and ruin. But as we are told, this cannot lead to anything but war, because it has been programmed to do that. It was conceived in the mind of Satan in his determination “to destroy the world” (Moses 4:6). The whole purpose of the program is to produce blood and horror on this earth.⁴⁶

Similarities and differences in the consequences of Adam and Eve versus those of the serpent. While the serpent is the only one of the three parties that was directly cursed, there is a similarity in the nature of the consequences suffered by each party: “In each case, the judgment is of a twofold nature: it affects what is of central concern in the life of each entity, and it regulates a basic relationship.”⁴⁷ As for the serpent, it is henceforth restricted to a humiliating diet and form of movement and will be crushed by the seed of the woman. The woman will suffer in childbearing and in the challenges of marriage relationships and of becoming one with the man in a fallen world. And the man is consigned to hard labor and to strict obedience to the commandments of the Lord.

43 Joseph Smith Jr., May 7, 1843, in Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1969), 297; see also May 17, 1843, p. 301; May 21, 1843, p. 305.

44 *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1985), 7:9.

45 N. J. Dawood, *The Koran* (London, England: Penguin Books, 1997), 109–110, surah 7, ayats 11–18; compare 15:32–44; 17:61–63; 38:74–85.

46 Hugh W. Nibley, “Gifts,” in *Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 9 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1989), 92.

47 Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary*, The JPS Torah Commentary, ed. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 27.

In other ways, however, the nature of the consequences is different for Adam and Eve than for the serpent. In the case of the man and the woman, Bible scholar Umberto Cassuto argues that what may seem solely as punishments should be regarded instead as “measures taken for the good of the human species in its new situation.”⁴⁸ Adam and Eve are exposed in nakedness, but God will clothe them (Moses 4:27); they are subject to temporal and spiritual death, but God will bless them with posterity and the eventual possibility of eternal life (Moses 5:11); they are bereft of the food of the garden, but God will give them seeds of life-sustaining grains (Moses 4:24).

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:20–21; Genesis 3:14–15

Moses 4:22–25; Genesis 3:16–19. The Challenges and Blessings of Celestial Marriage

4:22; 3:16. “*thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*” This statement has been the subject of much misunderstanding. In an honest effort to make sense of the troubling English translation of “rule over” in the King James Version, some scholars have mistakenly suggested that it should be read instead as “rule with.” Unfortunately, the “rule with” translation does not hold up under scrutiny. In her BYU master’s thesis, RoseAnn Benson argued conclusively that the “rule with” translation should be abandoned. In every occurrence of the underlying Hebrew she examined, the phrase is best understood as “rule over,” as when a king rules over his subjects.⁴⁹

In trying to apply this statement to modern marriage relationships, we must understand it for what it is: a sad description of the fallen conditions of mortal life. Briefly, a careful study of the Hebrew text in its scriptural context reveals that the Lord is not telling Adam and Eve how they *should* treat each other but is rather describing a tragic tendency in mortal marriages that they must *avoid*. Specifically, the Hebrew word for “desire” in “thy desire shall be to thy husband” does not refer to a romantic attraction but rather to a contentious wish to “overcome or defeat another.”⁵⁰ In addition, the “rule” of the husband

⁴⁸ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 1, *From Adam to Noah*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, 1998), 163.

⁴⁹ RoseAnn Benson, “The Marriage of Adam and Eve: An Ancient Covenant” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2003), 72–73, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/4522/>.

⁵⁰ John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 58.

depicted in the Hebrew version of the phrase is not benevolent but controlling. The sense of this terrible situation is well captured in a modern Bible translation: “You will want to control your husband, but he will dominate you.”⁵¹ As further evidence for this interpretation, note that the same Hebrew terms for “desire” and “rule” that describe a relationship of competition and rancor later reappear in God’s warning to Cain: “Satan desireth to have thee. . . . And thou shalt rule over him” (Moses 5:23).

Bible scholar Victor Hamilton interpreted God’s words as a warning to Adam and Eve. Unless they are careful, the conditions of a fallen world may lead them “to break the relationship of equality and turn it into a relationship of servitude and domination. . . . Far from being a reign of co-equals over the remainder of God’s creation, the relationship [would then become] a fierce dispute, with each party trying to rule the other. The two who once reigned as one [would unrighteously] attempt to rule each other.”⁵²

This is a war that can never be won since God’s intent was never for one party to dominate the other. The Hebrew word for “help meet” (Moses 3:18) means “a helper or strength corresponding to him”—or, in other words, a completing counterpart. “This term cannot be taken as demeaning because Hebrew *’ezer*, employed here to describe the intended role of the woman, is often used of God in His relation to man.”⁵³ President Howard W. Hunter explained, “The Lord intended that the wife be . . . a companion equal and necessary in full partnership.”⁵⁴ Thus, in Moses 2, both man and woman are created in the image of God, and in Moses 3, they are described as corresponding strengths. Note that the role given to the woman is similar to one of the names for God Himself: *eben ’ezer* (1 Samuel 7:12), which might best be translated as “stone of strength corresponding or equal to the opportunity or need.”

After the Fall, God warned Adam and Eve—and each of us—of the sad consequences that would arise if the couple turned their powers away from their originally intended, mutually fortifying purpose. Otherwise, married couples would face an equal match of opposing wills, with each spouse bitterly contending for domination over the other.

Like the blessing of childbirth, the experience of married love holds out a promise of happiness, yet its practice in a fallen world is frequently mixed with sorrow. Of the great blessings that await all generations of women who have suffered under unrighteous dominion, Elder James E. Talmage wrote,

51 Genesis 3:22 New English Translation.

52 Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 202.

53 Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary*, The JPS Torah Commentary, ed. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 21.

54 *The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (Salt Lake City, UT: Bookcraft, 1997), 152.

When the frailties and imperfections of mortality are left behind, in the glorified state of the blessed hereafter, husband and wife will administer in their respective stations, seeing and understanding alike, and cooperating to the full in the government of their family kingdom. Then shall woman be recompensed in rich measure for all the injustice that womanhood has endured in mortality. Then shall woman reign by Divine right, a queen in the resplendent realm of her glorified state, even as exalted man shall stand, priest and king unto the Most High God.⁵⁵

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:22–25; Genesis 3:16–19

Moses 4:26; Genesis 3:20. Adam Names Eve

“Adam called his wife’s name Eve.” Both the renaming of the woman and the reclothing of the couple “speak of a future for the individual(s) beyond the miserable present.”⁵⁶ Significantly, the book of Moses (unlike Genesis) reveals that in the beginning, God Himself gave not only the new clothing but also Eve’s new name. Thus, we can be certain that Adam’s speech was a test of recognition, not an act of naming. In other words, Adam did not “call her name Eve”—rather he “called out her name: ‘Eve!’”⁵⁷

Eve’s previous name (‘ishah = “woman”) had been provisional, pronounced before Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit of the tree of knowledge and before they were able to bear children. Adam now saw Eve as God saw her and could thus name her as God had originally named her. According to René Guénon, “all ancient traditions agree that the true name of a living thing reflects precisely its nature or its very essence.”⁵⁸ Nahum Sarna noted that Eve’s new name “expresses her nature and destiny positively and sympathetically.”⁵⁹ As John Sailhamer observed, “Her first name pointed to her origin (‘out of man’), whereas her second name pointed to her destiny (‘the mother of all living’).”⁶⁰

55 James E. Talmage, “The Eternity of Sex,” *Young Woman’s Journal* 25, no. 10 (October 1914): 600–604, <https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/YWJ/id/17248/rec/25>.

56 Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 207.

57 André Chouraqui, trans., *La Bible* (Paris, France: Desclée de Brouwer, 2003), 23.

58 René Guénon, *Symboles fondamentaux de la Science sacrée* (Paris, France: Gallimard, 1962), 36.

59 Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary, The JPS Torah Commentary*, ed. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 29.

60 John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990), 57.

“mother of all living.” The name “Eve” corresponds to the Hebrew *havvah*, whose vocalization suggests the possible meaning “propagator of life.” Adam rejoiced in the promise of motherhood given to Eve (Moses 4:22). Though they were now subject to death, human life would continue after their death through the fulfillment of God’s command to multiply and replenish the earth. Moreover, in her role as the “mother of all living,” Eve not only became the *physical* dispenser of life but also served as an example to her children in their higher calling to seek *eternal* life. On the temple themes in Eve’s naming, see the minute for Moses 3:18–20; Genesis 2:18–20.

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:26; Genesis 3:20

Moses 4:27; Genesis 3:21. God Clothes Adam and Eve

“I, the Lord God, [made] coats of skins, and clothed them.” As a replacement for the flimsy aprons of fig leaves and in partial compensation for the loss of the “garment of light” Adam and Eve were said (in Jewish tradition) to have been clothed in prior to their transgression, the Lord made Adam and Eve “garments of skin.” These garments were intended to protect Adam and Eve in their exposed and fallen state, to remind them of their covenants, and to serve as a token of the glorious celestial robes that awaited them through their faithfulness. Nibley wrote: “A garment is a sign of protection, of dignity, of modesty; it is not just a sign of those things, it actually does impart them.”⁶¹

At the time of Moses, the function of the skin garment was subsumed by the linen coat and breeches worn next to the skin by priests in the tabernacle precincts (see Exodus 39:27–28). As Matthew B. Brown observed, “the fine linen worn by heavenly beings is described as ‘clean and white’ or ‘pure and white’ and is therefore an appropriate symbol of worthiness or righteousness (see Revelation 3:4–5; 15:6; 19:8). Since linen is not the product of an animal that is subject unto death, or ‘corruption’ as it is called, it is also a fitting symbol of immortality, which is also called ‘incorruption.’”⁶²

61 Hugh W. Nibley, “Sacred Vestments,” in *Temple and Cosmos: Beyond This Ignorant Present*, ed. Don E. Norton, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley 12 (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1992), 116.

62 Matthew B. Brown, *The Gate of Heaven: Insights on the Doctrines and Symbols of the Temple* (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 1999), 81–82. See 1 Corinthians 15:52–54.

Recalling the parallels between the layout of the Garden of Eden and Israelite houses of God, Bible scholar Gary A. Anderson pointed out that

the vestments of the priest matched exactly those particular areas of the Temple to which he had access. . . . Each time the high priest moved from one gradient of holiness to another, he had to remove one set of clothes and put on another to mark the change. . . .

In Eden a similar set of vestments is found, again each set suited to its particular space. (a) Adam and Eve were, at creation, vested like priests and granted access to most of Eden. (b) Had they been found worthy, an even more glorious set of garments would have been theirs (and according to St. Ephrem, they would have entered even holier ground). (c) But having [transgressed], they were stripped of their angelic garments and put on mortal flesh. Thus, when their feet met ordinary earth—the realm of the animals—their constitution had become “fleshly,” or mortal.⁶³

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:27; Genesis 3:21

Moses 4:28–31; Genesis 3:22–24. God Sends Adam and Eve Forth from Eden

4:28; 3:22. “lest he . . . partake also of the tree of life.” Though no explicit prohibition occurs prior to this verse, linguistic evidence suggests that Adam and Eve never ate the fruit of the tree of life while they lived in Eden.⁶⁴ In support of this view, a Samaritan commentary on the verse excludes the tree of life from the other trees in the garden from which Adam and Eve were originally given permission to eat.

4: 28; 3:22. “eat and live forever.” During their sojourn in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed immortality, but partaking of the forbidden fruit made them subject to death. As a result of their choice, “the new situation to be avoided is . . . eating from the [Tree of Life] after having taken from the Tree of Knowledge.”⁶⁵

63 Gary A. Anderson, *The Genesis of Perfection: Adam and Eve in Jewish and Christian Imagination* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 122–123.

64 See a discussion of this evidence in Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, *In God’s Image and Likeness 1: Creation, Fall, and the Story of Adam and Eve*, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Salt Lake City, UT: Eborn Books, 2014), 276–77.

65 Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and the Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2000), 231.

4:31; 3:24. “at the east of the Garden.” The entrance to the garden—and presumably the only means of accessing it—is on the east side, at the end farthest from the mountain of God’s presence.

4:31; 3:24. “cherubim.” The term, which is left untranslated, may be related to the Akkadian *karibu* (“intercessor”) or *karibi* (“gatekeepers”). In temple contexts, the essential function of priests who act in the role of the cherubim is analogous to the role of the cherubim in the garden: they were to be as sentinels guarding the portals of the temple against unauthorized entry, governing subsequent access to secure compartments, and ultimately assisting in determining the fitness of temple worshipers to enter God’s presence (Doctrine and Covenants 132:19).

4:31; 3:24. “flaming sword.” Translated by Bible scholar Nahum Sarna as “the fiery ever-turning sword,” this is a “separate, protective instrument, not said to be in the hands of the cherubim.”⁶⁶ While the function of the cherubim is to selectively admit those authorized to enter, Hugh Nibley argued that the fire and steel combined in the sword were specifically meant to repulse the serpent, forever preventing its return to the garden.⁶⁷

4:31; 3:24. “to keep the way of the tree of life.” The mention of a sacred path leading from the place of Adam’s exile back to the garden ends the story on a note of hope. The cherubim will open the way for humankind once it is prepared to enter the celestial paradise and eat from the tree of life (see Revelation 2:7; 22:14). A rabbinic tradition has it that the last divine word that rang in the ears of Adam and Eve as they left the Garden of Eden was *teshuv*, meaning “You shall return!”⁶⁸

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:28–31; Genesis 3:22–24

Moses 4:32. Epilogue

“See thou show them unto no man.” This instruction is similar to the prohibition in Moses 1:42: “These words were spoken unto Moses in the mount, the name of which shall not be known among the

⁶⁶ Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation Commentary*, The JPS Torah Commentary, ed. Nahum M. Sarna and Chaim Potok (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 30.

⁶⁷ Hugh W. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: An Egyptian Endowment*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 2005), 319–320

⁶⁸ André LaCocque, *The Trial of Innocence: Adam, Eve, and the Yahwist* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2006), 31.

children of men. And now they are spoken unto you. Show them not unto any except them that believe. Even so. Amen.”

Source

Book of Moses Minute by Jeffrey M. Bradshaw

Related verses

Moses 4:32

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