

The Fall of Adam

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THE THREE PILLARS OF ETERNITY

The three greatest events that ever have occurred or ever will occur in all eternity are these:

1. The creation of the heavens and the earth, of man, and of all forms of life;
2. The fall of man, of all forms of life, and of the earth itself from their primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state; and
3. The infinite and eternal atonement, which ransoms man, all living things, and the earth also from their fallen state so that the salvation of the earth and of all living things may be completed.

These three divine events—the three pillars of eternity—are inseparably woven together into one grand tapestry known as the eternal plan of salvation. We view the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ as the center and core and heart of revealed religion. It brings to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. Salvation is in Christ.

But had there been no fall, there could have been no atonement. The fall of Adam brought temporal and spiritual death into the world, and it is from these deaths that man and all forms of life are ransomed through the atonement wrought by the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam brought mortality; Christ brought immortality. Salvation comes because of the fall and the atonement.

But if the earth and man and all living things had not been created in their physical and paradisiacal state, in a state of deathlessness, there could have been no fall. The fall, with its resultant probationary estate, is the child of the original and primeval creation, and the atonement is the child of the fall.

Hence salvation was made available in and through and because of the creation of the heavens and the earth and all that in and on them are. Salvation comes because of the creation, the fall, and the atonement; these three are each part of one divine plan.

It is not possible to believe in Christ and his atoning sacrifice, in the true and full sense required to gain [p. 88] salvation, without at the same time believing and accepting the true doctrine of the fall. If there had been no fall, there would have been no need for a Redeemer or Savior. And it is not possible to believe in the fall, out of which immortality and eternal life come, without at the same time believing and accepting the true doctrine of the creation. If there had been no creation of all things in a deathless or immortal state, there could have been no fall, and hence no atonement and no salvation. The Father's eternal plan called for the creation, for the fall, and for the atonement, all woven together into one united whole.

In connection with the second Article of Faith, we shall consider the creation and the fall and man's probationary estate so as to lay the necessary foundation for our study of the atonement as set forth in the third Article of Faith.

THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS

Mankind's knowledge of the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of life in all its forms and varieties, comes by revelation from the Creator himself. The Lord has revealed only that portion of eternal truth relative to the creation of all things that finite minds are capable of understanding. He has given man only what he needs to know to comprehend the true doctrine of the fall, and thus to gain that salvation which comes because of the fall. There are various man-made, speculative theories about the creation. That these theories do not accord with the revealed word and that they change with every wind that blows is well known. All of this is part of the divine design. Each person is free to choose his beliefs with reference to all things, the creation included. Proper choices enable him to build a house of faith that will shelter him from every wind of false doctrine that may chance to blow in his day.

To create is to organize. In the beginning the Lord Jehovah, in obedience to the direction of the Father, declared: "We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell; and we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." (Abraham 3:24–25.) Thus, the spirit children of the Father were to undergo a mortal probation. And the purpose of the creation was to provide the way and means whereby man might be saved.

The creative events took place during six periods of time, called days. Divine laws and powers governed all that transpired. As set forth in holy writ, the work was accomplished as follows:

First Day: God organized and formed the atmospheric heavens and the physical earth. The earth was without form and void; that is, it was empty and desolate. Darkness reigned. A divine decree brought forth light, and as the newly created planet rotated on its axis, day and night came into being.

Second Day: A firmament or expanse called heaven was created so as to divide the waters on the earth from those in the atmospheric heavens.

Third Day: The waters on the earth were gathered into one place called the sea, and dry land appeared. The earth was prepared to bring forth grass, herbs, trees, and foliage. Seeds were planted, and all forms of plant life grew. Each variety then brought forth its own seed; this seed could reproduce only its own kind.

Fourth Day: The earth was given its relationship to the sun, moon, and stars. These lights in the firmament were so organized as to be for signs and for seasons, for days and for years.

Fifth Day: Fishes and great whales and every living creature that dwells in water came forth. Winged fowls in all their varieties were created. All these were commanded to multiply and fill the waters and the earth, each bringing forth after his own kind.

Sixth Day: This was the creative day of days. On it animal life, cattle, beasts, living creatures of all sorts, everything that creepeth upon the earth—all these came forth. Then the Eternal Father created man in his own image and likeness, both male and female. They were given dominion over all other created things and were commanded to multiply and fill the earth with those of their own race. (Genesis 1; Moses 2; Abraham 4.)

At this point the holy word says: "Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." (Moses 3:1.) The creation was accomplished; it was done. This earth, and man, and life in all its forms and varieties existed in physical form. But none of these had the same nature they now possess. The great Creator had created a paradisiacal earth, an Edenic earth, an earth of the kind and nature that will exist during the Millennium, when it will be renewed and receive again its paradisiacal glory. There was as yet neither procreation nor death. These would enter the scheme of things only after the fall. The earth, man, and all created things were in a deathless state of immortality, but they were so organized that they could become mortal through the fall.

And so the Lord, in the Mosaic account, makes the needed interpolative explanations to enable us to understand the nature of the original creation, the paradisiacal creation, the creation that antedated the fall. There is no revealed account of the spirit creation, simply an explanation that all things were created in heaven before they were created naturally on earth. And [p. 89] although all things had been created physically, "there was not yet flesh upon the earth, neither in the water, neither in the air." That is, there was no flesh as we know it, no mortal flesh, no mortality. All forms of fish and fowl and animal life existed physically before man was placed on earth, and yet Adam is described as "the first flesh upon the earth, the first man also." (Moses 3:2–7.) Through his fall, Adam became mortal. He took upon himself mortal flesh and became the first mortal flesh on earth, and the effects of his fall then passed upon the earth and all created things.

THE UNIVERSAL FALL

After the creation came the fall; after all things had been created, all things fell. The fall was as universal as the creation. It included man, the earth, and all forms of life. Through the fall, all things passed downward to a lower status; they lost the station and dignity that once was theirs and were changed from the primeval and paradisiacal state to their present mortal state. This change from a deathless to a mortal state brought with it all things that appertain to mortality, including procreation, disease, suffering, and death. None of these existed on this earth prior to the fall.

This change of status for all created things is plainly set forth in the revealed word. "Because that Adam fell, we are," Enoch said; "and by his fall came death; and we are made

partakers of misery and woe." (Moses 6:48.) We live on earth, we shall die, and we are subject to all of the ills of the flesh—all because of the fall.

"Were it not for our transgression we never should have had seed," said Eve, the mother of all living, "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 5:11.) Except for the fall, the earth would not be peopled; we would still be in the preexistence living as spirits, and that agency and those trials we now possess would not be. There would be no redemption from death, no immortality, no eternal life, no salvation of any sort. The purposes of God would thus be frustrated and come to naught.

In expounding the true doctrine of the fall, as it grew out of the creation, Lehi said: "If Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden." He would be there now, fresh and vibrant, with all the strength and beauty of youth, for there was no death. "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." All created things—the earth; plants, herbs, and trees; fishes, fowls, animals, and beasts; that which creepeth upon the earth, or swimmeth in waters, or flieth in the air—all things would have retained their paradisiacal state. They would not be mortal and therefore not subject to death.

Speaking of our first parents, Lehi testified: "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.) Mortality, procreation, and a probationary estate, with all its woes and miseries—all these came because of the fall.

We do not know how the fall was accomplished any more than we know how the Lord caused the earth to come into being and to spin through the heavens in its paradisiacal state. We have been given only enough information about the creation and the fall to enable us to understand the purposes of the Lord, to exercise faith in him, and to gain our salvation.

As to the fall, the scriptures set forth that there were in the Garden of Eden two trees. One was the tree of life, which figuratively refers to eternal life; the other was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which figuratively refers to how and why and in what manner mortality and all that appertains to it came into being. "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat," the Lord told our first parents, "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.)

Eve partook without full understanding; Adam partook knowing that unless he did so, he and Eve could not have children and fulfill the commandment they had received to multiply and replenish the earth. After they had thus

complied with whatever the law was that brought mortality into being, the Lord said to Eve: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children, and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." To Adam the decree came: "Cursed shall be the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also, and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Thus the paradisiacal earth was cursed; thus it fell; and thus it became as it now is.

Adam was then told that he would surely die, returning through death to the dust whence his physical body had come. And then the Lord said to his Only Begotten: "Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand and partake also of the tree of life, and eat and live forever [in his sins!], therefore I, the Lord God, will send him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (Moses 4:22–29.) Such is the ancient account of the fall.

The fall of Adam brought temporal and spiritual death into the world. Temporal death is the natural death; it occurs when body and spirit separate, thus leaving the body to return to the dust whence it came. Spiritual death is to be cast out of the presence of the Lord and to die as pertaining to the things of righteousness. Adam died spiritually when he was cast out of the heavenly presence found in the garden, and he remained spiritually dead until he repented and was born again through baptism and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. Having thus the companionship of the Holy Ghost, he became alive in Christ and was again guided and directed from on high. He was again in the presence of the Lord. Adam died temporally when his spirit separated from his mortal body.

MAN'S PROBATIONARY ESTATE

The effects of Adam's fall pass upon all mankind; that is, all are mortal and all die temporally. Also, all accountable persons are dead spiritually until they repent and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus, this life becomes a probationary estate in which all are commanded to repent and reconcile themselves to God through the cleansing blood of his Son.

Properly understood, it becomes apparent that the fall of Adam is one of the greatest blessings ever given of God to mankind. It is the way and the means whereby the spirit children of the Father go forth from their celestial home to gain mortal and then immortal bodies. And it provides the way for the experiences, tests, and trials that prepare the faithful for eternal life. Is it any wonder, then, that Michael himself—who stood next to the Lord Jehovah in power, might, and dominion, when they both dwelt in the presence of the Father—is it any wonder that Michael was the one chosen to come here as Adam to make such glorious blessings available to the billions of his descendants who should be born on earth?

Alma recited the account of Adam's fall and told how Adam was cast out of the garden lest he partake of the tree of life and live forever in his sins. To live forever in one's sins is to

be damned; to live forever free from sin is to be saved. And so, Alma concluded, "there was a time granted unto man to repent, yea, a probationary time, a time to repent and serve God. 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."

If this had happened, Alma said, "the word of God would have been void, and the great plan of salvation would have been frustrated." Adam must fall; Adam must die spiritually; Adam must repent and keep the commandments and live again spiritually; Adam must die temporally; Adam must be raised in the resurrection—all this must be or he could not be saved.

Because Adam and Eve were cut off both temporally and spiritually, "they had become carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature, [and] this probationary state became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state." Such being the case, and if there were no plan of redemption, their souls would have been "miserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord" forever. Man could not redeem himself from that which befell him "because of his own disobedience," Alma said. "Therefore, according to justice, the plan of redemption could not be brought about, only on conditions of repentance of men in this probationary state, yea, this preparatory state." And the plan of mercy, the plan of redemption, called for God himself to atone "for the sins of the world." (Alma 42:1–15.)