

## ***Sinister Spirit***

*Tracing the Spirit of Antichrist Through Current Events*

By Timothy Zebell

## **Appendix C.9**

### Mormon Doctrine Exalts the Fall of Adam and Eve

*The Following comes from the Mormonism Research Facility.*

*(<http://www.mrm.org/fall.>)*

#### The Fall

Mormonism teaches that The Fall was a wonderful and fortunate event, empowering man with more liberty to choose (now “knowing good and evil”), with the ability to procreate, and with the opportunity to prove one’s worthiness through a learning process unto personal exaltation and full potential (godhood). This is connected to other Mormon doctrines like the purpose of life and eternal progression. The curses that followed the fall of Adam and Eve are considered blessings, and the action that Adam and Even committed is considered righteous, intelligent, and worth imitating. To rationalize this, Mormons make a distinction between “transgression” and “sin”, and argue from the premise that Adam and Eve could not have obeyed the command to “be fruitful and multiply” without first eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

“Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy”. (1 Nephi 2:25)

“Blessed be the name of God, for because of my [Adam’s] transgression my eyes are opened, and in this life I shall have joy, and again in the flesh I shall see God” (Moses 5:10)

“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 5:11)

“The fall of man came as a blessing in disguise,... I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin.... It is not always a sin to transgress the law..” (Joseph F. Smith,*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, p. 114)

“Adam did only what he had to do. He partook of that fruit for one good reason, and that was to open the door to bring you and me and everyone else into this world, for Adam and Eve could have remained in the Garden of Eden; they could have been there to this day, if Eve hadn’t done something. One of these days, if I ever get to where I can speak to Mother Eve, I want to thank her for tempting Adam to partake of the fruit. He accepted the temptation, with the result that children came into this world. And when I kneel in prayer, I feel to thank Mother Eve, for if she hadn’t had that influence over Adam, and if Adam had done according to the commandment first given to him, they would still be in the Garden of Eden and we would not be here at all. We wouldn’t have come into this world. So the commentators made a great mistake when they put in the Bible at the top of page 3, as I think it is (it may not be the same page in every Bible), the statement “Man’s shameful fall.”” - Joseph Fielding Smith, October 1967 General Conference; cf. Liahona, Jan. 2006, 8-9

“Indeed, we honor and respect Adam and Eve for their wisdom and foresight. Their lives in the Garden of Eden were blissful and pleasant; choosing to leave that behind so they and the entire human family could experience both the triumphs and travails of mortality must not have been easy. But we believe they did choose mortality, and in so doing made it possible for all of us to participate in Heavenly Father’s great, eternal plan.” - M. Russell Ballard, *Our Search for Happiness: An Invitation to Understand the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, p. 87

“This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin in the strict sense, for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Joseph F. Smith, p. 115)

“Some may regret that our first parents sinned. This is nonsense. If we had been there, and they had not sinned, we should have sinned. I will not blame Adam or Eve, why? Because it was necessary that sin should enter into the world; no man could ever understand the principle of exaltation without its opposite; no one could ever receive an exaltation without being acquainted with its opposite. How did Adam and Eve sin? Did they come out in direct opposition to God and to His government? No. But they transgressed a command of the Lord, and through that transgression sin came into the world. The Lord knew they would do this, and He had designed that they should.” - Brigham Young<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols., 10:, p.312.

“The decision of Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit was not a sin, as it is sometimes considered by other Christian churches. It was a transgression—an act that was formally prohibited but not inherently wrong... Their choice did not come from a desire to disobey the Lord, but from a desire to gain wisdom. Because of this choice, we have the opportunity to come to earth and learn, as Adam and Eve did, how to choose good over evil. Express your gratitude for Adam and Eve and the choice they made... Encourage class members to follow Adam and Eve’s example and choose good over evil.” – *Preparing for Exaltation* (Mormon Sunday School material)

“The fall of Adam was not a sin but a blessing. It enables us to progress toward exaltation. We had to experience mortality like our Father in Heaven, and Adam and Eve fulfilled their mission to make this possible. Because of them, we were able to have a body and come to earth to gain experience in choosing between good and evil” (*Preparing for Exaltation*, p.9).

“We and all mankind are forever blessed because of Eve’s great courage and wisdom. By partaking of the fruit first, she did what needed to be done. Adam was wise enough to do likewise.” (Russell M. Nelson, “Constancy amid Change,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, p. 33)

“When first teaching this doctrine, do not teach everything you know about it.” (Instructions to missionaries regarding the doctrines of the Creation and the Fall in *Preach My Gospel*, p. 50)

“The Fall was not a disaster. It wasn’t a mistake or an accident. It was a deliberate part of the plan of salvation.” – Bruce Hafen<sup>2</sup>

“The fall was not a disaster; it wasn’t a mistake or an accident. It was a deliberate part of the Lord’s plan of salvation...without obtaining the bitter, we’d never be able to have the sweet...” – Tom Perry<sup>3</sup>

“Adam fell, but he fell in the right direction. He fell toward the goal... Adam fell, but he fell upward” (Sterling Sill, assistant to the Twelve Apostles, “The Fall of Man Still Goes On,” *Church News*, July 31, 1965, p.7).

“The fall of Adam has been called a fall upward, but it must be remembered that the upwardness of that fall began with the provisions of the redemption.” (Improvement Era, 1921. “Vital Problems of

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce C. Hafen in “The Atonement: All for All”. April 2004 General Conference message. Available online at <http://www.lds.org/general-conference/2004/04/the-atonement-all-for-all?lang=eng>.

<sup>3</sup> Available at <http://nn.byu.edu/story.cfm/66045>.

Life: A Study for the Advanced Senior Classes of the M. I. A.”, 1920-21, by Dr. George H. Brimhall

“The great purpose of the advent of the Messiah in the fulness of time was to redeem the children of men from certain consequences of the fall. For, although that experience was necessary in the development of man, and was, as has been said, a “fall upwards,” it had certain consequences that called for redemption. One of these was death, from which there would have been no resurrection but for the redemption.” – Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 1, by Janne M. Sjodahl, George Reynolds

“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.” – Bruce McConkie, “New Witness for the Articles of Faith”

“The story of the Fall wasn’t new, but the Restoration added the knowledge of a mortal probation. Now people could understand why Adam and Eve’s choice was wise and prudent rather than selfish and sinful—and why the consequences, though difficult, were desirable. Now people could understand that God wasn’t blaming or punishing them, but ultimately helping them.” – Brad Wilcox, *The Continuous Atonement*

The Mormon understanding of the Fall makes an artificial distinction between “sin” and “transgression”, and goes against Biblical testimony which describes The Fall as tragic, sinful, and crippling (Romans 5:12; 1 Timothy 2:14), not liberating. Second, it falsely assumes, without biblical warrant, that Adam and Eve could not “be fruitful and multiply” without eating “the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden”. It presumes a man-centered goal of God in redemptive history (to give humans the opportunity to prove their worthiness and progress unto full godhood), and misreads the curse given in Genesis 3:16-19 as a blessing:

“To the woman he said, ‘I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.’ And to Adam he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 11:3-4 tells us the following:

“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.”

This carries with it enormous relevance: Paul does not want his readers to imitate Eve, and Paul wants us to reject the proclamation of “another Jesus” or the receiving of “a different spirit” or a “different gospel”. He criticizes them for putting “up with it readily enough”.