

Mormonism from a Biblical Perspective

Examining LDS doctrine and beliefs by searching the Bible

© Copyright 2008, LifeAfterJoseph.org, All Rights Reserved.

All verses quoted from the New King James Bible, unless otherwise noted. Where the full Bible text is not represented, omissions are represented by ellipses (...). Summaries of sections of scripture as well as author additions to the text will be enclosed in brackets [].

Genesis, Chapter 3

1 Now the serpent... said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Here we see the first workings of Satan and our first opportunity to see his tactics. Notice that his very first attack – one he still uses effectively to this day – is to try to get Eve to question the validity of the word of God. Satan no longer tempts us to doubt God’s word about eating a piece of fruit, but He is constantly at work getting people to question the validity of God’s word as contained in the Bible. He is still saying, “Hath God *really* said that?” The 8th Article of Faith for the LDS church is; *We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.* This has the effect of placing the entire Bible in doubt and, when compared against the Book of Mormon or modern prophetic revelation, a less-than-reliable source of God’s valid word.

2 And the woman said unto the serpent... God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Here we have the second tactic that Satan uses to undermine the word of God – outright denial. God had plainly told Adam and Eve that they *would* die if they ate of the fruit, and yet Satan blatantly contradicts what God had said, in essence calling God a liar. Joseph Smith claimed to have restored many passages of the Bible to their original form. These changes now appear in the LDS scripture known as the Joseph Smith Translation. A comparison of Joseph’s restored translation against the traditional Bible shows very many instances of Joseph changing the meaning of a passage to its exact opposite. If the Bible is indeed God’s valid word, Joseph’s changing of that word amounts to calling God a liar.

5 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.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Here we have Satan’s tactic number three. It was pride that caused the angel Lucifer to fall and become Satan. He must have known that pride could be a weak spot for this new creation of humans as well. His third attack was this; you can be like God. The ultimate goal for man in LDS theology is to become like God is now. We clearly see all three initial attacks from Satan present in the LDS church. I should say at this point that I am not accusing Latter-day Saints of being Satanic any more than Adam and Eve were

Satanic. Adam and Eve were fooled by a crafty and cunning adversary. Fortunately, God was ready for this and had already provided a means of reconciliation and restoration... for Adam and Eve, for Latter-day Saints, for all of us.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

Here in this small verse, we have one of the most powerful truths presented in the Bible. When man sins, they realize they need a covering for their sins, and then seek to cover their own sins. This played out very literally for Adam and Eve. Their sin revealed to them their need for a covering. Realizing this need, they immediately went to work covering themselves before God would see them in their condition. We are no different today. When we realize that we have sinned, we also initially seek to hide that fact from God. We want to appear righteous and good before him, not naked and sinful. So we start working to cover our own sins. We pray more often, we go to church more often, we give more money to the church. We basically “do religion” to try to cover our sins. We think if we can just figure out how to cover our own sins, God will overlook them. Adam and Eve were doing the same thing in a very literal way. If it hadn’t been such a terrible transgression, I have to think God might have laughed when He saw their quickly thrown together fig leaf aprons. Did they really think that such a rudimentary covering would hide their sin from the very God that created not only them, but the very universe they lived in, right down to the fig leaves they were now trying to pass off as clothing? They must have looked quite pitiful and helpless. They must have looked much like we look to Him now as He watches us scurry around trying to make a covering for our own sins.

8 ...and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden... And the LORD God said unto the serpent... I will put enmity [animosity or hostility] between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Here we have the first beautiful prophecy of the Bible. God gives Satan power to bruise man’s heel. In other words, he can cause hurt to the human race, but a wound to the heel is hardly fatal. But God will bring about Someone through Eve’s seed – her posterity – that will have the power to bruise the head of Satan. Some translators have shown that this word *bruise* can, and possibly should, be translated as *crush*. Either way, an injury to the head can be fatal. Jesus Christ is the prophesied Seed who will have the power to deal Satan a blow that will crush him. This crushing blow came to Satan as Jesus rose from the grave after His crucifixion, removing sin and death from God’s people and reconciling them to Himself.

16-21 ...the LORD God made coats of skins, and clothed them.

Here is another addition to the amazing symbolism we saw beginning with Adam and Eve’s attempts to make their own coverings. We see here that God makes a covering for them. The word translated as *covering* here is the same Hebrew word that is later translated *atonement*. An atonement literally means a covering. There is so much doctrine and emotion tied up in the word atonement that it is hard to believe that it is the same word a Jew would use for the ordinary lid of a container or a robe of animal skins. This verse could just as easily read that God made an atonement for them to cover their nakedness. To the original author, it would have sounded the same.

But the symbolism goes much deeper still. Imagine what this scene must have looked like to Adam and Eve. They were living in Paradise. There was no death, no violence, no blood, no sadness. Adam had just recently finished giving names to all of the animals that God had created for them. He had been given charge over them and was caring for them. He must have found immense joy in this work because that is the work he was given to do in Paradise. He must have developed a love and attachment to these wonderful animal creations. Adam and Eve had no concept of sickness, violence, or death. Then, in order to cover their sin, they watched as God took one of these amazing animals and put it to death. They must have been horrified at the sight of it. Above all else, it must have been terrible to see the life of this animal, its blood, run out of its body. God was giving them – and us – a powerful picture of what it takes to cover sin. This animal had to give its life for Adam and Eve. They must have been sick to their stomachs as they donned these clothes, realizing what a change their sin had brought into the world.

People often ask about those in parts of the world where they may live their entire lives and never hear about Jesus Christ. “I can’t believe in a God who would condemn someone to hell just because they don’t live in the right place,” they’ll say. From the foundation of the world, God taught the mother and father of everyone who has ever lived about the sacrifice that must be made to reconcile them with God. The Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 1:20; *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, [even] his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:* Even the way we stay alive physically speaks to us of how we will be made to live spiritually. Do we survive by eating rocks, dirt, and gravel? No, we live through the sacrifice of something living. A fish, a bird, a plant, an animal. It is the most basic of human laws. We live because other living things die. We have eternal spiritual life in the same way. Possibly no one was given a more vivid image of this principle than were Adam and Eve, who both caused and witnessed the first death.

22-24 ...So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims...

Here we see the protection that God places at the entrance of the Garden of Eden to keep Adam and Eve from returning. This too is rich in symbolism. Adam and Eve have been removed from the place where they communed with God. They were now separated from Him. Thousands of years later when Moses would be given instructions to build the Ark of the Covenant, he would be told to place two cherubim atop the covering of the Ark. When the presence of God entered the temple, He dwelt between these cherubim. This is the same picture we see in the Garden of Eden. Cherubim are placed at the place of God’s presence. Although the Bible does not say it specifically, I believe it entirely possible that Adam and Eve, and eventually their posterity, could appear before the presence of the Lord between the cherubim at the gate of the garden just as later the High Priest, representing the entire nation of Israel, could appear before the presence of the Lord between the cherubim atop the Ark of the Covenant. God shows us in this that He desires to commune with us, even when we are separated from Him by sin.

[End]