

Fall

believe” can lead you to “give place” for the word to be “planted in your heart.” Then you will feel that the word is good, for it will begin to enlarge your soul and enlighten your understanding. This will strengthen your faith. As you continually nurture the word in your heart, “with great diligence, and with patience, looking forward to the fruit thereof, it shall take root; and behold it shall be a tree springing up unto everlasting life.” (See Alma 32:26–43.)

Additional references: Hebrews 11; James 1:5–6; 2:14–26; Ether 12:4–27; Moroni 7:20–48; D&C 63:7–11; 90:24

See also Baptism; God the Father; Jesus Christ; Repentance

Fall

In the Garden of Eden, God commanded, “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). Because Adam and Eve transgressed this command and partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they were cast out from the presence of the Lord (see D&C 29:40–41). In other words, they experienced spiritual death. They also became mortal—subject to physical death. This spiritual and physical death is called the Fall.

Our Fallen Condition

As descendants of Adam and Eve, we inherit a fallen condition during mortality (see Alma 42:5–9, 14). We are separated from the presence of the Lord and subject to physical death. We are also placed in a state of opposition, in which we are tested by the difficulties of life and the temptations of the adversary (see 2 Nephi 2:11–14; D&C 29:39; Moses 6:48–49).

In this fallen condition, we have a conflict within us. We are spirit children of God, with the potential to be “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). However, “we are unworthy before [God]; because of the fall our natures have become evil continually” (Ether 3:2). We need to strive continually to overcome unrighteous passions and desires.

Repeating the words of an angel, King Benjamin said, “The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam.” King Benjamin warned that in this natural, or fallen, state, each person will be an enemy to God forever “unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father” (Mosiah 3:19).

Benefits of the Fall

The Fall is an integral part of Heavenly Father’s plan of salvation (see 2 Nephi 2:15–16; 9:6). It has a twofold direction—downward yet forward. In addition to introducing physical and spiritual death, it gave us the opportunity to be born on the earth and to learn and progress. Through our righteous exercise of agency and our sincere repentance when we sin, we can come unto Christ and, through His Atonement, prepare to receive the gift of eternal life. The prophet Lehi taught:

“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 [Adam and Eve] 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.

Fall

“But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things.

“Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.

“And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall” (2 Nephi 2:22–26; see also verses 19–21, 27).

Adam and Eve expressed their gratitude for the blessings that came as a result of the Fall:

“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).

Redemption from the Fall

Because of our fallen, mortal nature and our individual sins, our only hope is in Jesus Christ and the plan of redemption.

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, everyone will be redeemed from the effects of the Fall. We will be resurrected, and we will be brought back into the presence of the Lord to be judged (see 2 Nephi 2:5–10; Alma 11:42–45; Helaman 14:15–17).

In addition to redeeming us from the universal effects of the Fall, the Savior can redeem us from our own sins. In our fallen state, we sin and distance ourselves from the Lord, bringing spiritual death upon ourselves. As the Apostle Paul said, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). If we remain in our sins, we cannot dwell in the presence of God, for “no unclean thing can dwell . . . in his presence” (Moses 6:57). Thankfully, the Atonement

“bringeth to pass the condition of repentance” (Helaman 14:18), making it possible for us to receive forgiveness for our sins and dwell in the presence of God forever. Alma taught, “There was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead” (Alma 12:24).

Gratitude for the Savior’s Atoning Sacrifice

Just as we do not really desire food until we are hungry, we will not fully desire eternal salvation until we recognize our need for the Savior. This recognition comes as we grow in our understanding of the Fall. As the prophet Lehi taught, “All mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer” (1 Nephi 10:6).

Additional references: Genesis 3; Mormon 9:12–14; Moses 4

See also Agency; Atonement of Jesus Christ; Original Sin; Plan of Salvation; Sin

Family

On September 23, 1995, President Gordon B. Hinckley, the 15th President of the Church, read the following proclamation in a general Relief Society meeting. This inspired proclamation, titled “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” has become the Church’s definitive statement on the family:

“We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator’s plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

“All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of