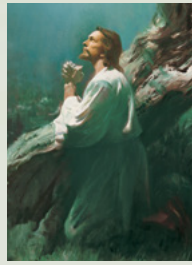




In Eden all things were created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without mortal probationary experiences.

Adam and Eve stepped down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to one of trial and testing on earth. This is known as the Fall.





THE Three Gardens OF GOD

*Join with me in gaining
a sound and
sure knowledge of
the Atonement.*

I feel, and the Spirit seems to accord, that the most important doctrine I can declare, and the most powerful testimony I can bear, is of the atoning sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

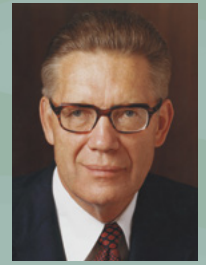
His Atonement is the most transcendent event that ever has or ever will occur from Creation's dawn through all the ages of a never-ending eternity.

It is the supreme act of goodness and grace that only a god could perform. Through it, all of the terms and conditions of the Father's eternal plan of salvation became operative. . . .

In speaking of these wondrous things I shall use my own words, though you may think they are the words of scripture, words spoken by other Apostles and prophets.

True it is they were first proclaimed by others, but they are now mine, for the Holy Spirit of God has borne witness to me that they are true, and it is now as though the Lord had revealed them to me in the first instance. I have thereby heard His voice and know His word. . . .

May I invite you to join with me in gaining a sound and sure knowledge of the Atonement.



**By Elder Bruce R.
McConkie
(1915–1985)**

Of the Quorum
of the Twelve
Apostles

Christ's disciples waited nearby and soon fell asleep as Jesus went into Gethsemane alone. Jesus "cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark 14:41).



In Gethsemane (above) and at Golgotha (below), Jesus Christ shed His blood and died on the cross. He atoned for the sins of the world and ransomed us from the Fall.



We must cast aside the philosophies of men and the wisdom of the wise and hearken to that Spirit which is given to us to guide us into all truth.

We must search the scriptures, accepting them as the mind and will and voice of the Lord and the very power of God unto salvation.

As we read, ponder, and pray, there will come into our minds a view of the three gardens of God—the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the Garden of the Empty Tomb where Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene.

In Eden we will see all things created in a paradisiacal state—without death, without procreation, without probationary experiences.

We will come to know that such a creation, now unknown to man, was the only way to provide for the Fall.

We will then see Adam and Eve, the first man and the first woman, step down from their state of immortal and paradisiacal glory to become the first mortal flesh on earth.

Mortality, including as it does procreation and death, will enter the world. And because of transgression a probationary estate of trial and testing will begin.

Then in Gethsemane we will see the Son of God ransom man from the temporal and spiritual death that came to us because of the Fall.

*The body of
Jesus Christ was laid in
a tomb in a garden.*



Three days later Christ arose from the tomb, leaving it empty. He had burst the bands of death and stood triumphant over the grave—thus completing the perfect Atonement.



At the empty tomb, the resurrected Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene and asked, “Why weepest thou? . . . She, supposing him to be the gardener, . . . turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (John 20: 15–16).

And finally, before an empty tomb, we will come to know that Christ our Lord has burst the bands of death and stands forever triumphant over the grave.

Thus, Creation is father to the Fall; and by the Fall came mortality and death; and by Christ came immortality and eternal life.

If there had been no fall of Adam, by which cometh death, there could have been no Atonement of Christ, by which cometh life.

And now, as pertaining to this perfect Atonement, wrought by the shedding of the blood of God—I testify that it took place in Gethsemane and at Golgotha, and as pertaining to Jesus Christ, I testify that He is the Son of the Living God and was crucified for the sins of the world. He is our Lord, our God, and our King. This I know of myself independent of any other person.

I am one of His witnesses, and in a coming day I shall feel the nail marks in His hands and in His feet and shall wet His feet with my tears.

But I shall not know any better than I know now that He is God's Almighty Son, that He is our Savior and Redeemer, and that salvation comes in and through His atoning blood and in no other way.

God grant that all of us may walk in the light as God our Father is in the light so that, according to the promises, the blood of Jesus Christ His Son will cleanse us from all sin. ■

From "The Purifying Power of Gethsemane," Ensign, May 1985, 9–11; punctuation and capitalization standardized.

This was Elder McConkie's last apostolic witness in mortality; he passed away two weeks later.

Then Jesus said to Mary, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17).

