

The Atonement of Jesus Christ
Week Four – October 4, 2023
Overcoming the Effects of the Fall
Notes and Quotes

Ezra Taft Benson, “The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants,” *General Conference, April 1987.*

“Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ. No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind.”

“The Atonement of Jesus Christ: Glad Tidings of Great Joy,” *2007 Sperry Symposium, 242-243.*

While Adam’s fall brought us into a world filled with the nature and disposition to do evil, it is our conscious following of that nature that causes us to fall and separates us from God. In preaching to the priests of King Noah, Abinadi taught, “... all mankind [became] carnal, sensual, and devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil. Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state. But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God...” (Mosiah 16:3-5)

In our carnal and fallen state, our sinful nature becomes contrary to that God who gave us life and offends the spirit inside of us, robbing us of joy. We become enemies to God our Father and the godly “genes” within us. We are left in a state of misery and separation from God. Alma explains that, “all men that are in a state of nature, or... in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God, therefore they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness” (Alma 41:11). You cannot do wrong and feel right. Without Christ’s atonement for our sins, our spirits would become subject to the devil and “we [would] become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God, and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself” (2 Nephi 9:8-9). With no atonement to overcome our spiritual death, we would be left forever in a state of misery. Thus we see that with no atonement the effects of the Fall would be total and irrevocable. Mankind would be lost temporally and spiritually, without resurrection or repentance; forever separated from God. The “natural man” would remain an “enemy to God... forever and ever” without the power to become a saint (Mosiah 3:19). Thus estranged, we would be unable to become at one with God and obtain any kind of joy. Truly there had to be an infinite atonement to overcome the effects of the Fall in order to make us at one again with God and bring us a fullness of joy.

Moses 3:16-17

Joseph Fielding Smith, “Fall—Atonement—Resurrection—Sacrament,” *Charge to Religious Educators, 124.*

“I’m very, very grateful that in the Book of Mormon, and I think elsewhere in our scriptures, the fall of Adam has not been called a sin. It wasn’t a sin. ... What did Adam do? The very thing the Lord wanted him to do; and I hate to hear anybody call it a sin, for it wasn’t a sin. Did Adam sin when he partook of the forbidden fruit? I say to you, no, he did not! Now, let me refer to what was written in the book of Moses in regard to the command God gave to Adam. [Moses 3:16–17.] “Now this is the way I interpret that: The Lord said to Adam, here is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you want to stay here, then you cannot eat of that fruit. If you want to stay here, then I forbid you to eat it. But you may act for yourself, and you may eat of it if you want to. And if you eat it, you will die. I see a great difference between transgressing the law and committing a sin.”

(Cf. 2 Nephi 2:14-16, 22-27; D&C 29:34-43)

D&C 93:38-39

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses, 8:138-39;*

Our spirits were pure and holy when they entered our tabernacles; and if they have been defiled, it has been by the influence of Satan, through the weakness of the flesh. There is a constant warfare, and in the great majority of cases, the flesh overcomes the spirit. In the few cases where the spirit overcomes the flesh, it yields obedience to the whisperings of the eternal Spirit of truth, which elevates it above the power of all unholy desires and passions.

(Cf. Mosiah 15:5-7; Romans 7:21-25; 2 Peter 1:2-10; Moses 6:54-56)

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Joseph Smith, Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 181.*

We came to this earth that we might have a body and present it pure before God in the celestial kingdom. The great principle of happiness consists in having a body. The devil has no body, and herein is his punishment. He is pleased when he can obtain the tabernacle of man, and when cast out by the Savior he asked to go into the herd of swine, showing that he would prefer a swine's body to having none. All beings who have bodies have power over those who have not. The devil has no power over us only as we permit him. The moment we revolt at anything which comes from God, the devil takes power.

(Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; D&C 93:33-36)

Romans 7:21-25

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:287-88.

We have to fight continually, as it were, sword in hand to make the spirit master of the tabernacle, or the flesh subject to the law of the spirit. If this warfare is not diligently prosecuted, then the law of sin prevails.... The rule of the flesh brings darkness and death, while, on the other hand, the rule of the Spirit brings light and life. When through the gospel, the Spirit in man has so subdued the flesh that he can live without willful transgression, the Spirit of God unites with his spirit, they become congenial companions, and the mind and will of the Creator is thus transmitted to the creature. Did their spirits have their choice there is not a son or daughter of Adam and Eve on the earth but what would be obedient to the Gospel of salvation and redeem their bodies to exaltation and glory. But there is a constant warfare between them, still they must remain together, be saved and exalted together, or neither of them will be saved and exalted with the salvation and the exaltation which the Gospel offers.

(Cf. Mosiah 15:5-7; Alma 38:12; D&C 93:33)

Matthew 10:28

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Conference Report*, October 1914, 128.

It is true, we are engaged in a warfare, and all of us should be valiant warriors in the cause in which we are engaged. Our first enemy we will find within ourselves. It is a good thing to overcome that enemy first, and bring ourselves into strict obedience to the principles of life and salvation which he has given to the world for the salvation of men. When we shall have conquered ourselves, it will be well for us to wage our war without, against false teachings, false doctrines, false customs, habits and ways, against error, unbelief.

(Cf. Ezra 7:10; Romans 6:16-23; 7:22-25; Mosiah 15:5)

2 Nephi 2:26-29

Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, 69-70.

The Devil cannot exercise his influence over us, only as we permit him to do so.... In the first place the spirit is pure, and under the special control and influence of the Lord, but the body is of the earth, and is subject to the power of the Devil, and is under the mighty influence of that fallen nature that is of the earth. If the spirit yields to the body, the Devil then has power to overcome the body and spirit of that man, and he loses both.... When you are tempted ... stop and let the spirit, which God has put into your tabernacles, take the lead. If you do that, I will promise that you will overcome all evil, and obtain eternal lives.

(Cf. Romans 7:21-25; Mosiah 3:19; 15:7)

D&C 93:23-36

David A. Bednar, “Ye are the Temple of God,” *Ricks College Devotional*, January 11, 2001.

Have we ever really considered why having a physical body is so important? Now I know we can all say the right words when answering the question about why we are here on the earth, but do we really understand why a body is so central to the Father’s plan of happiness? Do we perhaps recite this answer so frequently and routinely that we fail to recognize its true importance? Now brothers and sisters, the statement of Brigham Young and these verses from 2 Nephi must be studied thoroughly and pondered prayerfully. Neither the statement by President Young nor the scriptures we just read assert that the physical body is inherently evil. Rather, we live in a fallen world. The very elements out of which our bodies were created are by nature fallen and ever subject to the pull of sin, corruption, and death. Thus, the Fall of Adam and its consequences affect us most directly through our physical bodies. And yet as President Young stated, we are dual creatures, for at the same time that we inhabit a physical body that is subject to the Fall, we also have a spirit that represents the eternal part of us; we are the spirit sons and daughters of God and have inherited divine qualities from Him. The precise nature of the test of mortality, then, can be summarized in the following questions: Will my body rule over my spirit, or will my spirit rule over my body? Will I yield to the enticings of the natural man or to the eternal man? That, brothers and sisters, is the test. We are here on the earth to develop godlike qualities and to learn to bridle all of the passions of the flesh (Alma 38:12).

(Cf. Psalms 82:6; 2 Nephi 2:26-29; Moses 6:54-56)

David O. McKay, *Conference Report*, April 1950, pp. 31-37

There is another responsibility correlated and even coexistent with free agency, which is too infrequently emphasized, and that is the effect not only of a person's actions but also of his thoughts upon others. Man radiates what he is, and that radiation affects to a greater or less degree every person who comes within that radiation. Of the power of this personal inkiness William George Jordan impressively writes: “Into the hands of every individual is given a marvelous power for good or evil—the silent, unconscious, unseen enhance of his life. This is simply the constant radiation of what man really is, not what he pretends to be. Every man, by his mere living, is radiating sympathy, or sorrow, or morbidity, or cynicism, or happiness, or hope, or any of a hundred other qualities. Life is a state of constant radiation and absorption: to exist is to radiate; to exist is to be the recipient of radiation. Man cannot escape for one moment from this radiation of his character, this constantly weakening or strengthening of others. He cannot evade the responsibility by saying it is an unconscious enhance. He can select the qualities that he will permit to be radiated. He can cultivate sweetness, calmness, trust, generosity, truth, justice, loyalty, nobility—make them vitally active in his character—and by these qualities he will constantly affect the world.”

(Cf. Isaiah 3:9; Matthew 5:14-16; D&C 88:67)

M. Russell Ballard, "Giving Our Spirits Control over Our Bodies," General Conference, October 2019.

Today, "living right" can be a pretty confusing concept, especially if you spend much time on social media, where any voice can declare real truths or false concepts about God and His plan for His children. Thankfully, members of the Church have eternally true gospel principles to know how to live so that we might be better prepared when we must die.

Just a few months before I was born, my Apostle grandfather, **Elder Melvin J. Ballard**, gave a talk that, for some people, captured the essence of what it means to live right. Titled "Struggle for the Soul," his talk focused on the ongoing battle between our physical bodies and our eternal spirits. He said, "*The greatest conflict that any man or woman will ever have ... will be the battle that is had with self,*" explaining that Satan, "*the enemy of our souls,*" attacks us through "*the lusts, the appetites, the ambitions of the flesh.*" (Melvin J. Ballard, Salt Lake Tabernacle, May 5, 1928.)

So the primary battle is between our divine and spiritual nature and the carnal natural man. Brothers and sisters, remember, we can receive spiritual help through the influence of the Holy Ghost that can "teach you all things." Help can also come through the power and blessings of the priesthood.

Now, I ask, how is this battle going with each one of you?

President David O. McKay said: "*Man's earthly existence is but a test as to whether he will concentrate his efforts, his mind, his soul, upon things which contribute to the comfort and gratification of his physical nature, or whether he will make as his life's [purpose] the acquisition of spiritual qualities.*" (*Teachings of the Prophets of the Church*, David O. McKay, 2003, 14)

Moses 3:7

Russell M. Nelson, "The Creation," General Conference, April 2000.

The plan required the Creation, and that in turn required both the Fall and the Atonement. These are the three fundamental components of the plan. The creation of a paradisiacal planet came from God. Mortality and death came into the world through the Fall of Adam. Immortality and the possibility of eternal life were provided by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement were planned long before the actual work of the Creation began.

While visiting the British Museum in London one day, I read a most unusual book. It is not scripture. It is an English translation of an ancient Egyptian manuscript. From it, I quote a dialogue between the Father and the Son. Referring to His Father, Jehovah—the premortal Lord—says:

"He took the clay from the hand of the angel, and made Adam according to Our image and likeness, and He left him lying for forty days and forty nights without putting breath into him. And He heaved sighs over him daily, saying, 'If I put breath into this [man], he must suffer many pains.' And I said unto My Father, 'Put breath into him; I will be an advocate for him.' And My Father said unto Me, 'If I put breath into him, My beloved Son, Thou wilt be obliged to go down into the world, and to suffer many pains for him before Thou shalt have redeemed him, and made him to come back to his primal state.' And I said unto My Father, 'Put breath into him; I will be his advocate, and I will go down into the world, and will fulfil Thy command.'"

Although this text is not scripture, it reaffirms scriptures that teach of the deep and compassionate love of the Father for the Son, and of the Son for us—attesting that Jesus volunteered willingly to be our Savior and Redeemer.

(Cf. Genesis 2:7; Exodus 3:13-15; Isaiah 42:5-6; Mosiah 2:21; Abraham 5:7)

Exodus 3:13-15

Sandra Thurman Caporale, Memorial Church of Christ, Houston, TX

There was a moment when Moses had the nerve to ask God what his name is. God was gracious enough to answer, and the name he gave is recorded in the original Hebrew as YHWH. Over time we've arbitrarily added an "a" and an "e" in there to get YahWeH, presumably because we have a preference for vowels.

But scholars and Rabbis have noted that the letters YHWH represent breathing sounds, or aspirated consonants. When pronounced without intervening vowels, it actually sounds like breathing.

YH (inhale): WH (exhale).

So a baby's first cry, his first breath, speaks the name of God. A deep sigh calls His name – or a groan or gasp that is too heavy for mere words. Even an atheist would speak His name, unaware that their very breathe is giving constant acknowledgment to God. Likewise, a person leaves this earth with their last breath, when God's name is no longer filing their lungs. So, when I can't utter anything else, is my cry calling out His name?

Being alive means I speak His name constantly.

So, is it heard the loudest when I'm the quietest? In sadness, we breathe heavy sighs.

In joy, our lungs feel almost like they will burst. In fear we hold our breath and have to be told to breathe slowly to help us calm down. When we're about to do something hard, we take a deep breath to find our courage.

When I think about it, breathing is giving him praise. Even in the hardest moments!

This is so beautiful and fills me with emotion every time I grasp the thought. God chose to give himself a name that we can't help but speak every moment we're alive.

All of us, always, everywhere.

Waking, sleeping, breathing, with the name of God on our lips.

(Cf. Isaiah 42:5-6; Mosiah 2:21; Abraham 5:7; Moses 3:7)

Isaiah 42:5-6

Heidi Smith, CES Seminary Instructor.

In the creation accounts, we are told that God breathed the breath of life into Adam, and it was then he became a living soul. In Mosiah, we are told that God lends us that same breath from day to day. The very breath that sustains our lives and enables us to breath, live, and speak belongs to God. It is His, but in His generosity and loving kindness, he lends it to us. Whenever I borrow something, I want to make sure that I use it in a way the lender would approve of and I want to make sure I return it in better condition than when I received it. So how am I using the breath that I have borrowed from God? Would he approve of the words I speak using that very breath? Has that breath been mixed with deceit and profanity so that when I return it to God, it is in worse condition and has been a net negative on the world? Or has it been spent praising God and bringing others to Christ? When my words return to God's ears, are they sweet to Him? Has every breath been borrowed with gratitude? How have I shown that gratitude through my words and the way that I live my life?

When we use our breath in a way that God, as a holy and perfect being, does not approve, we use His generous gift to blaspheme before Him. If God wanted to stop us from using our agency in a way that went against His purposes, he could easily do so. All he would have to do is take back the breath He is beneficently lending to us. But that isn't what God wants. God's work and glory is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. But that work is not a work of force. It is a work of loving guidance. God wants us to choose to be godly.

So he gives us the breath of life that we might live a life filled with gratitude and joy for the very breath that brings us life.

(Cf. Genesis 2:7; Mosiah 2:21; Abraham 5:7; Moses 3:7)