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The Fall of Man and His Redemption

Gerald N. Lund

One of the most misunderstood and misinterpreted doctrines in all of Christianity is the doctrine of the fall of Adam. Elder James E. Talmage said,

It has become a common practice with mankind to heap reproaches upon the progenitors of the family, and to picture the supposedly blessed state in which we would be living but for the fall; whereas our first parents are entitled to our deepest gratitude for their legacy to posterity—the means of winning title to glory, exaltation and eternal lives (70).

The LDS conception of the Fall as a necessary part of the overall plan of redemption stems heavily from the doctrines taught in the Book of Mormon. That doctrine is probably taught no more clearly and forcefully than it was by father Lehi to Jacob, his firstborn son in the wilderness. Sometime after the arrival of Lehi's colony in the promised land and possibly just shortly before his death, Lehi called his posterity together, along with the posterity of Ishmael, and gave them his final blessing. Each family group in turn received counsel and admonitions from the great patriarch (see 2 Nephi 1-4). Oddly enough the longest of all of these blessings, as recorded by Nephi, is that given to Jacob. And while the others are more like fatherly admonitions and counsel, Jacob's blessing is a major doctrinal exposition.

Lehi's Discussion of the Fall

Lehi's great blessing to his son is so full of doctrine and profound meaning that virtually every sentence and, in some cases, every word takes on great significance. Therefore, it would be helpful as we examine 2 Nephi 2, to step back and see the overall picture of what Lehi is trying to do. In broad terms he seems to be doing four things after making his introduction: (1) he outlines five fundamental and important principles that we must adhere to before we can understand the Fall; (2) he discusses the redemption of the Messiah and how he redeems men from the Fall; (3) he discusses the Fall in some detail, particularly focusing on the reason there had to be a fall; and (4) he concludes by exhorting both Jacob and the other members of his family to use their agency wisely to reap the blessings of the Atonement.

In more detail, the outline of these four points is as follows:

I. FIVE FUNDAMENTALS (2 Nephi 2:4-5)

- A. The Spirit is the same yesterday, today and forever (v. 4).
- B. The way is prepared from the fall of man.
- C. Salvation is free.
- D. Men are instructed sufficiently to know good from evil, i.e. the law is given unto them (v. 5).
- E. By the law is no flesh justified.
 - 1. By the temporal law men are cut off.
 - 2. By the spiritual law they perish and become miserable forever.

II. REDEMPTION COMETH IN AND THROUGH THE HOLY MESSIAH (2 Nephi 2:6-10)

- A. The Messiah:
 - 1. Is full of grace and truth (v. 6).

2. Offers himself as a sacrifice for sin.
 - a. This answers the ends of the law for those with a broken heart and contrite spirit (v. 7).
 - b. Unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.
- B. Therefore no flesh can dwell in God's presence except through his merits, mercy and grace (v. 8).
 1. This is so because he:
 - a. Laid down his life according to flesh.
 - b. Took it up again by the power of the Spirit.
 - c. Brought to pass resurrection.
 2. Which makes him the firstfruits unto God and allows him to make intercession for all men (v. 9).
 3. This intercession brings all men into God's presence where they will:
 - a. Be judged of him.
 - b. Receive punishment or happiness (v. 10).

III. WHY THE FALL? (2 Nephi 2:11-26)

- A. There must be opposition in all things (v. 11). If there weren't:
 1. There could be no righteousness or wickedness, etc.
 2. All things would be a compound in one.
 3. There would be no death, no life, no mental functions.
 4. There would be no purpose in the creation (v. 12).
- B. If that were true, then:
 1. The purposes of God would be destroyed (vv. 12-13).
 2. It would prove there is no creation and that we do not exist.
- C. But we do and there is a God, and he created opposition and gave us agency (v. 14).
- D. The Fall was part of God's divine plan. To bring about his eternal purposes, he:
 1. Set up opposing choices in the Garden (v. 15).
 2. Gave man his agency (v. 16).

3. Made both choices enticing.
 4. Allowed Satan to become the enticer for evil (vv. 17-18).
- E. And so Adam and Eve fell (v. 19).
1. They were driven out of the Garden of Eden.
 2. All mankind are born under the effects of the fall (v. 20).
- F. The lives of men were prolonged so they could repent and mortality became a time of probation (v. 21).
1. All men must repent since they are lost because of the Fall.
 2. If there had been no Fall:
 - a. Adam and Eve would have remained in the Garden of Eden (v. 22).
 - b. All things would have remained in the same state forever.
 - c. They would have had no children (v. 23).
 - d. They would have remained in a state of innocence, knowing neither good nor evil.
- G. Thus we see that the Fall (and all things associated with it) were a reflection of God's wisdom (v. 25).
1. Adam fell so men could be.
 2. Men are, that they might have joy.
 3. The Messiah redeems men from the Fall (v. 26).
 4. This allows them to be free and act for themselves.

IV. LEHI'S EXHORTATION AND SUMMARY

(2 Nephi 2:27-30)

- A. Two fundamental facts exist:
1. Men are free according to the flesh (v. 27).
 2. All that is expedient for them to have is given to them.
- B. The choice is simple. We can choose:
1. The Mediator who brings liberty and eternal life.
 2. The Devil who brings captivity and death.
- C. Lehi earnestly exhorts his sons to:

1. Follow the will of the Spirit and choose eternal life by:
 - a. Looking to the Mediator.
 - b. Harkening to his commandments.
 - c. Being faithful to his words (v. 28).
 2. Not follow the will of the flesh and choose eternal death, because this:
 - a. Gives the spirit of the devil power over us.
 - b. Brings us down to hell where Satan rules (v. 29).
- D. Final testimony that he (Lehi) has chosen the good part (v. 30).

Let us now examine Lehi's teachings in Jacob's blessing in more detail.

The Five Fundamentals

In these five fundamentals, Lehi outlines important points that must be understood before he can discuss the Fall and the redemption of man.

Fundamental 1: "The Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever" (v. 4). This is a significant point, especially for Jacob, who lived six centuries before the Messiah came to earth to work out the infinite atonement. From this statement, we know that the Atonement is retroactive. It doesn't matter when one is born. One can either look forward to the Atonement and have its redemptive power work in his behalf, or one can look backward to it and have its redemptive power work in his behalf. Indeed we learn from other sources that the Atonement is not only bi-directional but also literally omni-directional. In Moses 1:33 for example, we read that by the Only Begotten Son "worlds without number" were created. Elder Bruce R. McConkie commenting on that verse said,

Now our Lord's jurisdiction and power extend far beyond the limits of this one small earth on which we dwell. He is, under the Father, the

Creator of worlds without number (Moses 1:33). And . . . the atonement of Christ, being literally and truly infinite, applies to an infinite number of earths (65).

Speaking in the same vein, President Marion G. Romney said,

Jesus Christ . . . is the Lord of the whole universe. Except for his mortal ministry accomplished on this earth, his service and relationship to other worlds and their inhabitants are the same as his service and relationship to this earth and its inhabitants (46).

So it mattereth not—this earth or another, this time or a previous one—God is the same yesterday, today and forever, and the plan of redemption is the same yesterday, today and forever.

Fundamental 2: “The way is prepared from the fall of man” (v. 4). The fact that the plan of redemption was prepared long before the Fall took place is clearly taught in many places in the scriptures (e.g., D&C 124:33, 41; 128:5; 130:20). This is Lehi’s way of reminding his son of a second foundational principle, that the plan to redeem men from the Fall was laid from the very beginning. In other words, when Adam fell there was not a mad scramble in heaven to determine what to do to save men from the effects of the Fall.

Fundamental 3: “Salvation is free” (v. 4). Though Lehi gives this statement in three simple words, it is a profound and important concept. The best single commentary we have on 2 Nephi 2 is chapter 9. This is *Jacob’s own commentary* on the doctrine taught by his father. An excellent example of it is his commentary on the concept that salvation is free.

Come, my brethren, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore, do not spend money for that which is of no worth, nor your labor for that which cannot satisfy (2 Nephi 9:50-51).

Fundamental 4: Lehi states this fundamental principle in two different ways. “Men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil.” Then he says, “And the law is given unto men”

(v. 5). Though not stated explicitly by Lehi, he is speaking of those who reach accountability. Jacob later makes this point clearly (see 2 Nephi 9:25-26).

Let us examine for a moment exactly what Lehi means when he says “men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil” and “that the law is given them.” We know from other scriptures that the medium or the means by which this instruction comes to all men—through which and by which they come to a basic level of understanding of good and evil—is known as the Light of Christ. Moroni, citing the words of his father, Mormon, said,

For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God (Moroni 7:16).

And in latter-day revelation, it was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith that this Spirit of Christ, as Mormon called it, is also known as “the Light of Christ” (D&C 88:7). This light is the power which lights the moon and the stars and the sun, and gives life to all things, and is the power through which all things are governed (see D&C 88:7-13).

Fundamental 5: “By the law no flesh is justified” (v. 5). In that simple statement lies the primary reason that there must be a redeemer, and so we must examine Lehi’s fifth fundamental at greater length.

By the Law Men Are Cut Off

The word “justified” and its cognates—justification, justice or just—all have the same basic meaning. To be “just” means to be right or in order with God. Therefore to be justified, and the process of justification, are defined as, “declaration of right; thus judicial acquittal, the opposite of condemnation. . . .

Justification may be defined, in its theological sense, as the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of righteousness” (Fallows 2:1009).

To understand the reason Lehi says that by the law no flesh is justified or because of the law men are cut off, we must first understand the operations of the law of justice. In the Book of Mormon especially, this concept of justice is discussed in some detail by King Mosiah, by Alma and other of the prophets. The law of justice could be simply stated in both its negative and positive forms as follows:

The Law of Justice

1. For every obedience to the law there is a blessing;
2. For every violation of the law there is a punishment
(see D&C 130:20-21).

The scriptures seem to make it clear that the ultimate blessing from obedience to the law is joy and that the punishment from violation of the law is misery or suffering (2 Nephi 2:5).

Why is it then that Lehi says that by the law *no* flesh is justified? It is because no one keeps the law perfectly! If the law of justice were the only thing operating, no one could be justified (declared to be right or just) by virtue of the law alone, because as Paul says, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23; see also Romans 5:12; 1 Nephi 10:6). So by the law, that is, speaking as though there were nothing but the law operating, men would be cut off both temporally and spiritually. They would be cut off temporally because they cannot keep the law perfectly and they would be cut off spiritually because violation of the law makes one unclean and “no unclean thing can dwell . . . in his presence” (Moses 6:57; see also 2 Nephi 9:6-10).

Redemption Cometh In and Through the Holy Messiah

Now that he has laid foundation principles, Lehi turns to what could be thought of as a sixth fundamental principle. However, this principle is of such transcendent importance that he sets it apart and discusses it at great length. In verse 6, he says, “Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah”; this teaching is the natural follow-through from verse 5. Very simply put, Lehi states that men are *condemned* by the law but *redeemed* by the Messiah. His qualifying statement about the Messiah is interesting in and of itself; he adds “for he is full of grace and truth.” In the LDS Bible Dictionary is the following definition for “grace”:

A word that occurs frequently in the New Testament, especially in the writings of Paul. The main idea of the word is *divine means of help or strength*, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ. . . . This grace is an *enabling power* that allows men and women to lay hold on eternal life and exaltation after they have expended their own best efforts. Divine grace is needed by every soul in consequence of the fall of Adam and also because of man’s weaknesses and shortcomings (697; emphasis added).

Lehi’s point is that if Christ were not full of this grace or “enabling power,” he could not possibly redeem man.

Lehi’s next statement is that the Holy Messiah offers himself as “a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law” (v. 7). Harkening back to our concept of the law of justice, we see why Lehi makes this statement. Remembering the two principles that constitute the law of justice, i.e. obedience brings joy, violation brings suffering, then one could say that there are only two ways to satisfy the demands of that law. The *first* is to keep the law perfectly, that is, never to violate it in any degree. A *second* way to satisfy the demands of the law of justice would be to pay the penalty for any violations of it. What did the Messiah do to meet both those conditions? He kept the law perfectly. Not once in his entire mortal life did Jesus violate the law in any way. He

was the Lamb without spot or blemish. He was perfection and that perfection answered the law, that is the law had no claim on him. But Christ did more than this. Jacob, again adding to our understanding of what his father taught, states in 2 Nephi 9:21: “Behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam.” Not only did Christ keep the law perfectly for himself, but he suffered the penalty for all violations as though he himself were guilty of them. Thus he satisfied the law of justice in both dimensions.

Lehi also indicates in verse 7, that that sacrifice answered the ends of the law only for those who have “a broken heart and a contrite spirit.” Then he added, “unto *none else*” will that be done (emphasis added). To better understand why Lehi makes this statement and what it fully means for us, let us examine the doctrine of grace and works.

Members of the Church, particularly missionaries, have often been called upon to defend our belief that the way a man lives (his works) plays a critical role in his salvation. Protestants, especially Evangelical Christians, cite several references from the writings of Paul to indicate that a man is saved by grace (see Acts 16:31; Romans 3:28; 10:13; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9). Those statements by Paul have created some awkwardness in the minds of some Latter-day Saints, especially missionaries, about the issue of salvation by grace. The diagram on the following page has been used by some to help answer those questions.

This diagram is explained as follows: Through the fall of Adam two deaths came upon mankind. One was physical death, which is the separation of the body and the spirit. All of the children of Adam who are born into the world are subject to mortality, that is, physical death. But there was also a spiritual death. This is defined as being cut off or separated from the presence of God. Because Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, all men are born in a state of separation from the presence of God or in a state of spiritual death.

GRACE AND WORKS — ONE EXPLANATION

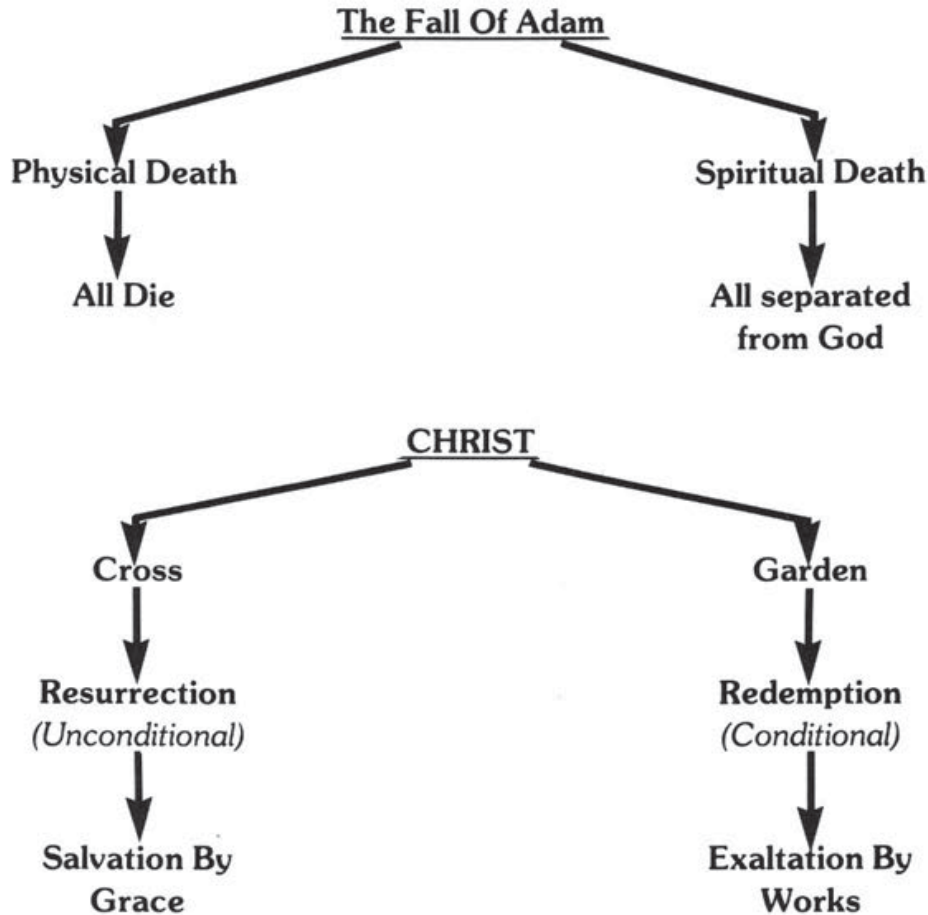


FIGURE 1. Grace and Works—One Explanation

The diagram then shows how Christ's redemption covers both the physical and the spiritual fall. The reasoning runs as follows. On the cross, the Savior gave up his life and overcame physical death through the resurrection, which gift he gives freely to all. Since no one has to do anything to be resurrected, this is an unconditional blessing and explains how we are "saved by grace" without any works on our part. We don't have to do anything; the grace of Christ resurrects everyone. But, the explanation continues, there is a second spiritual part of the

redemption which cannot be overlooked and that was done in the Garden of Gethsemane. Here the Savior took upon himself the sins of the world and suffered for all mankind. This suffering redeems the soul from hell, but this gift is *not* unconditional. Here men must do certain things to have this redemption operate in their behalf. This could be thought of, so the explanation continues, as exaltation by our works. Thus, the conclusion runs, we are saved (resurrected) by grace but we are exalted (redeemed) by our works. This is a neat and attractive explanation. *The only problem is it has four major doctrinal errors.*

The first doctrinal error in this explanation is that somehow salvation is different from exaltation. With very few exceptions, the scriptures almost always use the word salvation as synonymous with exaltation. For example, in Doctrine and Covenants 6:13, the Lord says, "If thou wilt do good, yea, and hold out faithful to the end, thou shalt be *saved* in the kingdom of God, *which is the greatest of all the gifts of God; for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation*" (emphasis added). To imply that salvation means only resurrection cannot be supported by scripture.

The second doctrinal error is the idea that the suffering and death on the cross covered only the effects of physical death and that the suffering in the Garden covered only the effects of spiritual death. Such an explanation is not justified by scripture either. The agony in the Garden and the suffering on the cross were both integral parts of the atoning sacrifice. No where in the scriptures do we find indications that the cross alone overcame physical death or that the Garden alone overcame spiritual death.

The third error is the idea that our works exalt us. As we have seen, one of Lehi's fundamental points is that no man can be justified, or saved, on the basis of works alone. It is by the merits, mercy and grace of the Holy Messiah (see 2 Nephi 2:8) that we are saved. We *are* exalted by righteous works, but *they are the Savior's works*, not our own. This is what Nephi meant

when he said “for we know that it is by grace [which quality the Messiah is filled with—see 2 Nephi 2:6] we are saved, after all we can do” (2 Nephi 25:23).

The fourth error in this diagrammed explanation is the idea that overcoming spiritual death is conditional upon how we live. It really depends on the Savior. Our second Article of Faith states, “We believe that men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam’s transgression.” If that is true, then to make coming back into the presence of God (overcoming spiritual death) conditional, when our separation from him was originally caused by the fall of Adam, would mean we do suffer punishment for Adam’s transgression and such is not the case. Let us now redo the chart (as shown on the following page) so that it reflects not only what father Lehi taught, but what the other scriptures teach as well.

The upper part of the previous chart was right. The fall of Adam did bring two deaths into the world—physical death and spiritual death. But as far as it applies to Adam’s fall, Christ’s redemption is unconditional and applies to all. In other words, since we did nothing to be under the effects of the Fall, except come through the lineage of Adam, it is not just that we should have to meet any conditions to have those effects taken away from us.

In verse 8, Lehi said, “He layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit.” The suffering of the flesh and the suffering of the spirit are both mentioned by Lehi as necessary to bring about the resurrection of the dead, and this resurrection is unconditional and all become immortal. But in verse 10, Lehi goes further and says, “And because of the intercession for all, *all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him*” (emphasis added).

That is a pivotal point. Not only does Christ’s redemption bring about resurrection for all without condition, but it also

THE MESSIAH REDEEMS MEN FROM THE FALL

(We believe men should be punished for their own sins...)

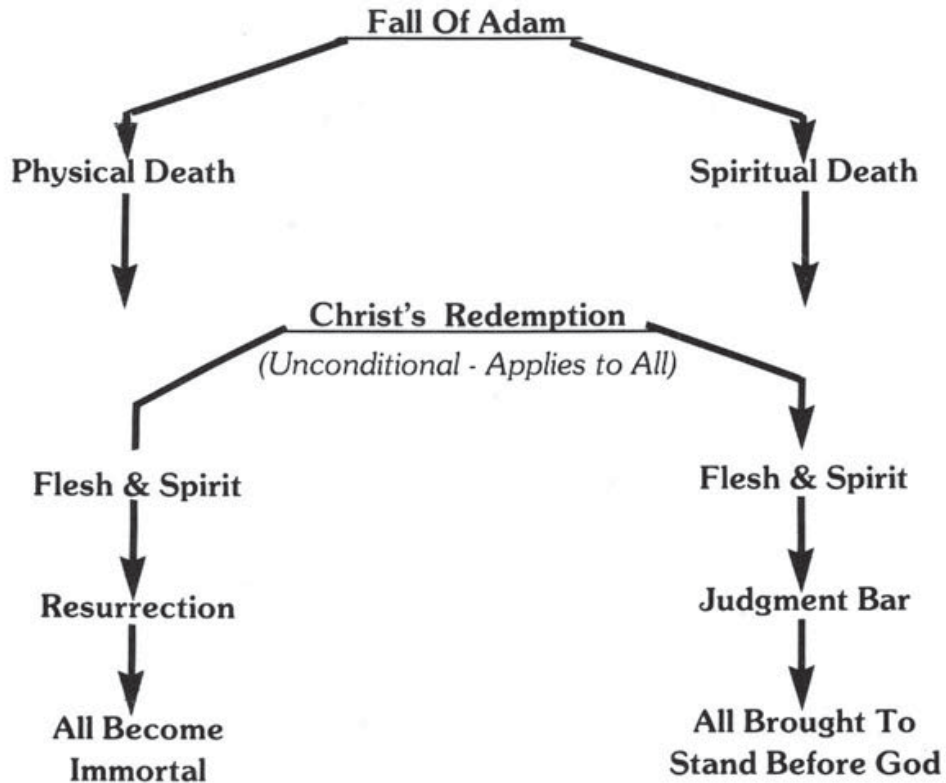


FIGURE 2. The Messiah Redeems Men from the Fall

brings all men to the judgment bar where they are brought into the presence of God to stand before him to be judged. If we are brought back into the presence of God, then spiritual death, or our separation from God, is overcome at that point. What does a man have to do to have this happen? Absolutely nothing. It, too, is unconditional. Thus both effects of the fall of Adam are automatically redeemed by the Savior.

The Fall of Me

But now we must consider Lehi's fourth fundamental point, that all men "are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil" (v. 5). If we know good from evil and then sin (which, according to Paul, all men do), then we must talk about a second fall. This is not the fall of Adam. *This is one's own personal fall.* This fall is brought about by our own transgression, not Adam's, and requires redemption as surely as did Adam's. We'll term this the "fall of me." Now, let us look at an additional chart on the following page that diagrams what happens as the result of the "fall of me."

Once a person reaches the age of accountability and sins by the use of his agency, he becomes unclean. Unless something happens to change him, when he is brought back into God's presence at the judgment, he will not be allowed to stay. Now, since he has no one to blame for this except himself, his redemption becomes conditional upon his actions. This is what Lehi meant when he said that the sacrifice which the Messiah offered to satisfy the ends of the law is viable only for those with a broken heart and a contrite spirit. This condition comes through faith and godly sorrow (see 2 Cor. 7:9-10) and is called repentance. It brings one to participate in the redemptive ordinances—baptism, confirmation, receiving the priesthood and the temple ordinances. Those who refuse to make this "new sacrifice" (3 Nephi 9:20) are characterized in the scriptures as having hard hearts and proud spirits. These are conditions that lead some to reject the priesthood ordinances. This is true even though, in some cases, the outward ordinances may have been performed. In other words, some members of the Church who have been baptized and confirmed and have received the Holy Ghost and perhaps even temple ordinances, have not exhibited a broken heart and contrite spirit. They have only gone through the outward motions and therefore will find no validity in those ordinances, no saving power.

**HE OFFERETH HIMSELF UNTO THOSE
WITH A BROKEN HEART**

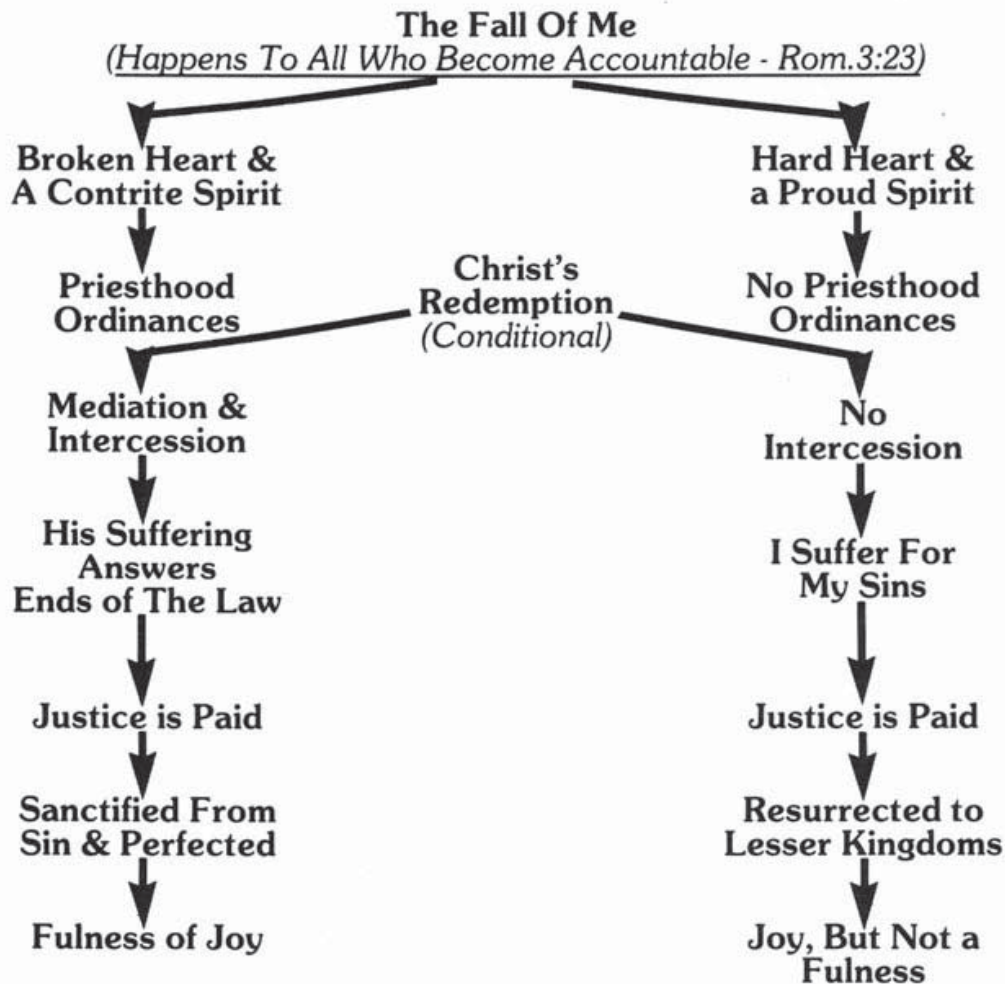


FIGURE 3. He Offereth Himself

But let's look first at what happens to those who do meet the conditions of a broken heart and contrite spirit. The left side of our diagram shows the process. The words which Lehi used are "mediation" and "intercession" (2 Nephi 2:9-10, 27). The mediation, or intercession, of the Messiah is applied to those with broken hearts and contrite spirits and his suffering, both on the cross and in the Garden, and his perfect obedience to law answer the demands of the law of justice. Or in Lehi's words, his life and death serve as a "sacrifice for sin" (see v. 7). Thus the demands of the law are met and justice is paid—not robbed

(see Alma 42:25). The person is sanctified from sin and perfected. Lehi's statement that it is the merits of the Messiah that save us and not our own merits is beautifully supported in the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein the Son says:

Listen to him who is the advocate with the Father, who is pleading your cause before him—Saying: Father, *behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin*, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life (D&C 45:3-5; emphasis added).

Now let's see what happens to those who do not meet the basic requirement of having broken hearts and contrite spirits. The right side of the diagram illustrates this.

Christ's redemption becomes inoperative for those who are hard of heart and proud of spirit and refuse to accept redemptive ordinances. He does not make intercession in their behalf, and this is so clearly explained in a modern revelation:

And surely every man must repent or suffer. . . . Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not. . . . For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; *but if they would not repent they must suffer even as I* (D&C 19:4, 15-17; emphasis added).

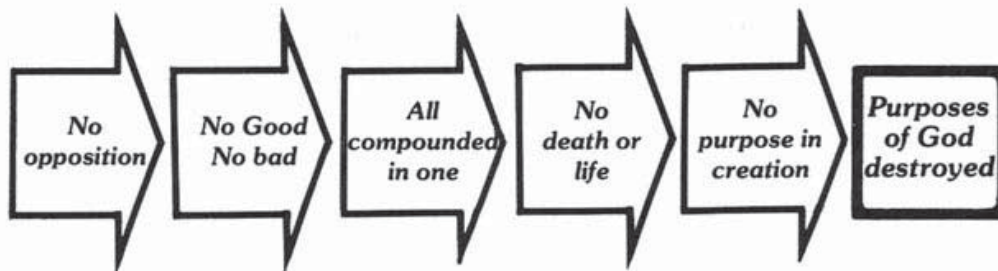
Either way, by Christ's suffering or the individual's, justice is paid. The price is paid by suffering. For the humble and obedient, the price was paid by the atoning sacrifice of the Messiah; for the rest it must be paid by themselves.

Why the Fall?

With the foundational principles firmly in place, Lehi is now ready to turn his attention to the question of the Fall and why it had to happen. It is not surprising that the Fall has caused so much confusion and misinterpretation, for on the surface it raises

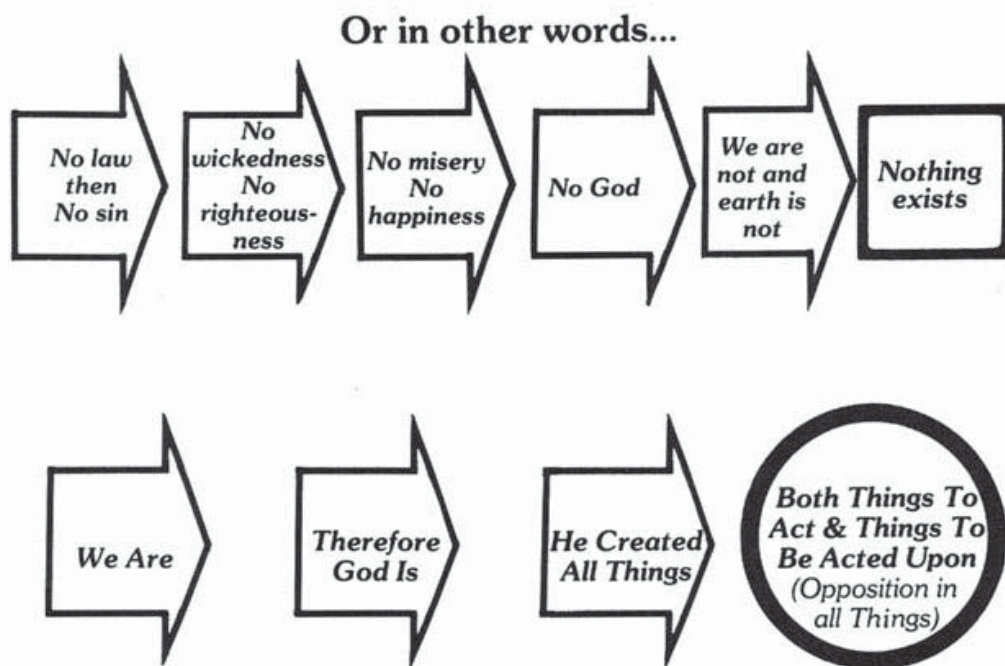
some difficult questions. Though Lehi does not pose these questions openly, he seems to sense them and proceeds to answer them with a marvelous chain of logical reasoning. His linchpin argument in explaining the reason the Fall is necessary is summarized in 2 Nephi 2:11: "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things." How pivotal this is to Lehi's whole line of reasoning in this chapter can be seen from how much time he spends defending and explaining that statement. The rest of verse 11 and all of verses 12-15 explain the reason there "must needs be" opposition. Lehi uses an interesting chain of reasoning to substantiate his statement. If we were to diagram it, it would look something like this:

LEHI'S CHAIN OF REASONING



In Moses 1:39, we learn that the work and glory of God have to do with bringing to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. Therefore, if the purposes of God were destroyed, the whole plan of salvation would become meaningless. Then, as though he has not made his point strongly enough, Lehi starts again and puts it in other words in a similar line of reasoning. Again if that were diagramed it would look as shown on the following page.

It is a powerful chain, for if there is any one thing that we can be absolutely certain of, it is our own existence. Working backwards from that irrefutable evidence, Lehi shows that God exists and therefore has created opposition. Or as he explains it in verse 14, he has created "both things to act and things to be acted upon."



The following attempts to sum up Lehi's chain of reasoning in just a few simple phrases: In order for God to bring about his purposes with mankind (their immortality and eternal life) there had to be opposition or opposing alternatives. If there were not opposition, man could not be exalted because there would be no accountability.

This brings up an important question. If opposition is necessary, why didn't God just create a world of opposition? Here, other scriptures help us understand why this could not be so. Moroni, citing his father's teaching, indicates that:

all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil. . . . But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God (Moroni 7:12-13).

The Prophet Joseph Smith, in the *Lectures on Faith*, indicated that one of the prerequisites for a man to have faith is to have an understanding of the nature, attributes and *perfections*

of God (3.4). He then commented, “What we mean by perfections is, the perfections which belong to all the attributes of his nature” (5.1). From these and other sources Dan Ludlow concluded the following points:

- It is contrary to the nature of God to create anything imperfect or unholy.
- It is contrary to the nature of God to entice men to violate law or to do evil.
- If God had created a world in which there was opposition, sin and evil, then we could hold him responsible for such conditions (14).

Therefore, the creation of the world (and man) was done in a perfect, holy and innocent state. To have done otherwise would have been contrary to the nature of God, which sets up an interesting problem. Opposition is necessary to man’s progression, but God could not create it. Lehi explains how this was resolved.

The Fall Was Part of God’s Divine Plan

Lehi now turns his attention to the Fall. Note the following points: (1) in verse 15, he indicates that God created our first parents and all things which were created, (2) he set up an opposition from the beginning, even the opposition of the forbidden fruit to the tree of life, (3) in verse 16, he indicates that he gave unto man his agency, (4) if man was to be truly free to act for himself, or in other words, if there are to be truly opposite choices (or opposition), he must be enticed by those choices, and (5) since God cannot entice man to make bad choices, Satan was allowed to come to earth to entice men to do evil (vv. 17-18). This final point is validated in other latter-day revelation. To the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord said:

And it must needs be [note the same language here that Lehi used] that the devil should tempt the children of men, or they could not be

agents unto themselves; for if they never should have bitter they could not know the sweet—Wherefore, it came to pass that the devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment (D&C 29:39-40).

The positive side of the option given to Adam was clearly enticing in and of itself. The Garden of Eden was a beautiful place in which to live. Fruits and flowers grew spontaneously. There was no death or sorrow or wickedness. It was a beautiful and enticing place. But how could the opposite be made so enticing that there truly would be opposition in this matter? This is why Satan and his angels are allowed to function.

To summarize, Lehi makes five important points as to why the Fall happened and how it helps the Lord fulfill his divine plan of redemption.

1. Opposition is necessary for man's progression (v. 11).
2. The Lord set up opposing choices (v. 15).
3. He gave man his agency (v. 16).
4. In order to make that agency operative, both choices had to be enticing (v. 16; see also D&C 29:39).
5. God allowed Satan to operate in the Garden and in this world to allow the negative option to be enticing in opposition to the positive one.

And So They Fell

When Lehi had established the reason for the Fall, he discussed the results of it for us. He pointed out that once the Fall had taken place and men were born into the world under its effects, this life became a state of probation or a time for man to prove themselves. He indicated that the days of the children of men were prolonged so they might repent and thus begin to bring into operation the plan of redemption (2 Nephi 2:21). As he did this, Lehi further emphasized the importance of the Fall by pointing out what would have happened had the Fall never taken

place (see vv. 22-23). Adam and Eve would have remained in the Garden of Eden. All things which were created would have remained in the state in which they were in prior to the Fall, which was a state of perfection, innocence, with no death, no sorrow, etc. They would have had no children. They would have remained in the state of innocence, having no joy for they knew no misery, not being credited for good because they could do no sin.

When one examines the conditions that resulted from the Fall, it becomes evident that all of them are necessary for the progression of mankind toward Godhood, for them to prove themselves and to become accountable before God. Therefore, again noting that if there had been no Fall the purposes of God would have been frustrated, Lehi concluded with eloquence and simple profundity:

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 2:24-26).

Lehi's Exhortation

With the fundamental facts laid out and an explanation as to the reason for the Fall, Lehi made his final moving exhortation to Jacob and his other sons (see vv. 27-30). The points come in rapid fire order. First, men are free according to the flesh and all that is expedient is given unto them. That provides an interesting formula that is so simple yet profoundly true:

Freedom (agency) + Knowledge = Accountability.

As we have already shown, without accountability there could be no sin or punishment. Without accountability, God could not make men gods, for if there were no other choice than to be good, there would be no merit in doing good. But God set up both conditions required to have accountability.

Finally, Lehi noted that the choice is really simple. As King Benjamin pointed out, there are many ways to commit sin that they cannot be numbered (see Mosiah 4:29). But in Lehi's thinking, all choices, all options, all alternatives boil down to one simple ultimate choice. It is this:

Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil (2 Nephi 2:27).

Lehi exhorted his sons to follow the will of the Spirit and choose eternal life by: (1) looking to the Mediator, (2) hearkening to his commandments, and (3) being faithful to his words (v. 28). The other alternative is to follow the will of the flesh and choose eternal death which gives the spirit of the devil power over us and brings us down to hell where Satan rules (v. 29). Finally, Lehi closed out his blessing to his son, Jacob, with his own testimony: "And I have chosen the good part, according to the words of the prophet" (v. 30).

Summary

We began this paper with a quote from Elder James E. Talmage wherein he said it has become common, even among Christians, to heap reproaches upon Adam and Eve for the Fall. But Elder Talmage concluded just the opposite,

Our first parents are entitled to our deepest gratitude for their legacy to posterity—the means of winning title to glory, exaltation, and eternal lives. But for the opportunity thus given, the spirits of God's offspring would have remained forever in a state of innocent childhood, sinless through no effort of their own; negatively saved, not from sin, but from the opportunity of meeting sin; incapable of winning the honors of victory because prevented from taking part in the conflict. As it is, they are heirs to the birthright of Adam's descendants—mortality, with its immeasurable possibilities and its God given freedom of action. From Father Adam we have inherited all the ills to which flesh is heir; but such are necessarily incident to a knowledge

of good and evil, by the proper use of which knowledge man may become even as the Gods (70).

Lehi's marvelous blessing to his son, Jacob, largely explains the reason this is the case. He caught the essence of it all in one couplet: "Adam fell that men might be, and men are that they might have joy" (2 Nephi 2:25).

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