

Modern References to the Fortunate Aspect of the Fall
And
The Garden Infertility Paradox

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Fortunate Fall References from Anointed Leaders (a recent sampling)

1) It starts with the statements that Lucifer makes in the temple. I claim that there would be no problem if we could but discuss those statements openly (e.g., in Gospel Doctrine classes, in YM/YW classes) without cultural taboo, so that our people could feel free to believe that it is still Lucifer, the father of all lies, who says them, in spite of the fact that we hear them in the temple.

You must partake of this fruit. For that is the way father obtained his knowledge.

I want you to take of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil that your eyes may be opened. You must partake of this fruit in order to comprehend that everything has its opposite: good and evil, virtue and vice, light and darkness, health and sickness, pleasure and pain.

There is no other way!

2) The “fortunate fall” reference, of course, came from Elder Holland (Where Justice, Love, and Mercy Meet, April, 2015):

“In our increasingly secular society, it is as uncommon as it is unfashionable to speak of Adam and Eve or the Garden of Eden or of a ‘fortunate fall’ into mortality. “Nevertheless, the simple truth is that we cannot fully comprehend the Atonement and Resurrection of Christ and we will not adequately appreciate the unique purpose of His birth or His death—in other words, there is no way to truly celebrate Christmas or Easter—without understanding that there was an actual Adam and Eve who fell from an actual Eden, with all the consequences that fall carried with it.”

I do not know the details of what happened on this planet before that, but I do know these two were created under the divine hand of God, that for a time they lived alone in a paradisiacal setting where there was neither human death nor future family, and that through a sequence of choices they transgressed a commandment of God which required that they leave their garden setting but which allowed them to have children before facing physical death.³ To add further sorrow and complexity to their circumstance, their transgression had spiritual consequences as well, cutting them off from the presence of God forever. Because we were then born into that fallen world and because we too would transgress the laws of God, we also were sentenced to the same penalties that Adam and Eve faced.

3) Backtracking a bit, we have Elder Maxwell, directly (though obliquely) quoting Lucifer:
So much depends, therefore, upon our maintaining gospel perspective in the midst of ordinariness and the pressures of temptation, tribulation, and deprivation. As we come to love the Lord more and more, we can understand, rather than resent, his purposes. He who should know has said that there is no other way. —Neal A. Maxwell, “Grounded, Rooted, Established, and Settled”, address given at Brigham Young University on 15 September 1981

4) Richard G. Scott, Make the Exercise of Faith Your First Priority, October, 2014

I liked his discussion of the toolbox (last part of his talk), but I found his lead-in reasoning to be more like rationalizing and I don't buy it because it is logic that derives straight from Lucifer's beguiling statements we hear in the pre-endowment. I was very uncomfortable. That first part was not consistent with Elder Packer's and Elder Christofferson's talks from Saturday morning of the same conference.

When Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden, all that they needed for daily sustenance was abundantly given to them. They had no difficulties, challenges, or pain. Because they had never experienced hard times, they did not know they could be happy. They had never felt turmoil, so they could not feel peace.

Eventually Adam and Eve transgressed the command to not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. By so doing they were no longer in a state of innocence. They began to experience principles of opposition. They began to encounter sickness that weakened their health. They began to feel sadness as well as joy.

Through Adam and Eve's partaking of the forbidden fruit, knowledge of good and evil was introduced into the world. Their choice made it possible for each of us to come to this earth to be tried and tested. ^(Moses 5:11) *We are blessed with agency, which is our ability to make decisions and to become accountable for those decisions. The Fall made possible in our lives feelings of both happiness and sadness. We are able to understand peace because we feel turmoil.*²

Our Father in Heaven knew this would happen to us. It is all part of His perfect plan of happiness. He prepared a way through the life of His perfectly obedient Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, for His Atonement to overcome every difficulty that we may experience in mortality.

5) Elder Dallin H Oaks, The Great Plan of Happiness, October, 1993

To the first man and woman on earth, the Lord said, “Be fruitful, and multiply” (Moses 2:28; see also Gen. 1:28; Abr. 4:28). This commandment was first in sequence and first in importance. It was essential that God's spirit children have mortal birth and an opportunity to progress toward eternal life. Consequently, all things related to procreation are prime targets for the adversary's efforts to thwart the plan of God.

When Adam and Eve received the first commandment, they were in a transitional state, no longer in the spirit world but with physical bodies not yet subject to death and not yet capable of procreation. They could not fulfill the Father's first commandment without transgressing the barrier between the bliss of the Garden of Eden and the terrible trials and wonderful opportunities of mortal life.

For reasons that have not been revealed, this transition, or "fall," could not happen without a transgression—an exercise of moral agency amounting to a willful breaking of a law (see Moses 6:59). This would be a planned offense, a formality to serve an eternal purpose. The Prophet Lehi explained that "if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen" (2 Ne. 2:22), but would have remained in the same state in which he was created.

"And they 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" (2 Ne. 2:23).

But the Fall was planned, Lehi concludes, because "all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things" (2 Ne. 2:24).

It was Eve who first transgressed the limits of Eden in order to initiate the conditions of mortality. Her act, whatever its nature, was formally a transgression but eternally a glorious necessity to open the doorway toward eternal life. Adam showed his wisdom by doing the same. And thus Eve and "Adam fell that men might be" (2 Ne. 2:25).

*Some Christians condemn Eve for her act, concluding that she and her daughters are somehow flawed by it. Not the Latter-day Saints! Informed by revelation, we celebrate Eve's act and honor her wisdom and courage in the great episode called the Fall (see Bruce R. McConkie, "Eve and the Fall," *Woman*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979, pp. 67–68). Joseph Smith taught that it was not a "sin," because God had decreed it (see *The Words of Joseph Smith*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980, p. 63). Brigham Young declared, "We should never blame Mother Eve, not the least" (in *Journal of Discourses*, 13:145). Elder Joseph Fielding Smith said: "I never speak of the part Eve took in this fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin. ... This was a transgression of the law, but not a sin ... for it was something that Adam and Eve had to do!" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56, 1:114–15).*

6) I am going to quote from then-Elder Russel M. Nelson, but before I do, I would indulge the reader to share an image in their mind of the way that I see myself when I objectively address the extremely awkward issue of offering corrections to anointed leaders. I am asking Father for the miracle to be able to stand in the presence of President Nelson, to have him peer into my soul, and for him to see there that I love him.

He will have been conflicted, because in his hands will be a manuscript that describes the difficult task of rooting out the influence Lucifer has in our theology, because of Lucifer's privileged position at the uncontested bully pulpit he keeps in our temple pre-endowment.

I need President Nelson to know that it is my testimony and my conviction that motivated me to research and prepare consecrated documents that tell the truth of the Fall, but it is my love for my Savior and my sustaining love for the Church and its anointed leaders that motivates me to bring something to their attention that others would possibly find embarrassing. I know that he will not. I know that he will see that it is because I love him that I want to prevent the greater embarrassment of having him lead a church that teaches Christ but that enshrines His adversary in our temples; and that teaches the adversary's lies unopposed and without rebuttal inside our sacred temples and in Sunday School classes. I know that as physician, he will appreciate the need for temporary pain and discomfort while a malignant tumor is removed, so that true healing can begin. I want him to see in my heart that I am having this conversation because I know we both love the Lord and would do anything for Him, short of disobeying God. This standing, this conveying, this painstaking analysis of the malignant tumor is done in my conviction that this is my "anything for the Lord".

I need Pres. Nelson to know that there is no way on this green earth I would aspire to such a conversation unless I was absolutely sure by a witness of the Spirit that I had found in the scriptures the true answer to the paradox of the Fall that has beset our church for over 170 years. The answer: *Believe God*. Believe God's words *exactly* when He speaks to us in the temple, and when He gives commandments to our first parents, then: be *exactly* obedient. Believe Jesus *exactly* when he says of the adversary: "there is *no* truth in him". Therefore disbelieve Satan *exactly* and always reject that Satan had a better way (an *only* way) for us, other than what God had spoken in the Garden.

"These three events—the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement—are three preeminent pillars of God's plan, and they are doctrinally interrelated."

"If that [paradisiacal] state had persisted, you and I would still be stranded among the heavenly host as unborn sons and daughters of God. (D&C 38:1; Abr. 3:22–23) "The great plan of [happiness] would have been frustrated" (Alma 42:5 also D&C 138:56)."

"To bring the plan of happiness to fruition, God issued to Adam and Eve the first commandment ever given to mankind. It was a commandment to beget children. (Gen. 1:28; Moses 2:28; Abr. 4:28.) A law was explained to them. Should they eat from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17), their bodies would change; mortality and eventual death would come upon them. (Moses 3:17; Abr. 5:13.) But partaking of that fruit was prerequisite to their parenthood. (Moses 5:11)

While I do not fully understand all the biochemistry involved, I do know that their physical bodies did change; blood began to circulate in their bodies. Adam and Eve thereby became mortal. Happily for us, they could also beget children and fulfill the purposes for which the world was created. Happily for them, "the Lord said unto Adam [and Eve (The Lord "called their name Adam" Gen. 5:2; Moses 6:9; emphasis added)]: Behold I have forgiven thee thy transgression in the Garden of Eden" (Moses 6:53). We and all mankind are forever blessed because of Eve's great courage and wisdom. By partaking of the fruit first, she did what needed to be done. Adam was wise enough to do likewise. Accordingly, we could speak

of the fall of Adam in terms of a mortal creation, because “Adam fell that men might be”. (2 Ne. 2:25; Moses 6:48)

Other blessings came to us through the Fall. It activated two closely coupled additional gifts from God, nearly as precious as life itself—agency and accountability. We became “free to choose liberty and eternal life ... or to choose captivity and death” (2 Ne. 2:27). Freedom of choice cannot be exercised without accountability for choices made. (D&C 101:78; D&C 134:1)” (Constancy amid Change, Russell M. Nelson, October, 1993)

Proof-texting (see for example <http://www.biblestudy.org/beginner/definition-of-christian-terms/prooftexting.html>) is manifest the same as how false paradigms prevent us from properly seeing information in the way it is scripturally or contextually intended or presented; and instead we filter the information in the way we perceive it according to our biases, and then represent it in an obscured composition. In the most extreme manifestations, truths become Lucifer’s blatant falsehoods. Deceptions and delusions promulgate, and the Lie lives on.

Here in Elder Nelson’s quote we see false-paradigm proof-texting manifest in several principal ways: (1) applying scriptures entirely out of context. In some cases incorrect context results in reversal of cause and effect; (2) improperly assigning the vague meaning of one verse to specific cases elsewhere in the canon; and (3) quoting the scriptures out of order in time sequencing, so that discombobulated orders of events lose the context entirely:

(1) The assumption that the state of infertility in the garden was part of God’s plan is based on the reference of Alma 42:5. But the verse is taken entirely out of context since Alma the younger is teaching Corianton about why cherubim and sword were placed to guard the way of the Tree of Life *after* the sin that resulted in their being expelled from the garden, as per Alma 42:2,3. The reference to the great plan of salvation in v. 5 has nothing to do with God’s will and intent for his children when He placed them in the garden, because it is phrased specifically in reference to (and *only* applies in the singular case of) the need for our probationary state *because* of the fall (v.4).

A second example of out of context citation is in the assumption of other blessings that come to us *as a result of the fall*. 2 Ne 2:27 as quoted, seems to suggest that our moral agency to choose came as a result of the fall. But it fails to acknowledge the prior verse (v.26) in which that freedom comes to us not because of the fall, but *is regained* because of the atonement. The atonement was necessary *because of* the fall, and the fall came *because of* transgression. (Moses 6:59) The transgression came *because* our parents already had the gift of moral agency as well as the full capacity to make those difficult decisions: Adam conclusively manifest that ability inside the Garden when he was first tempted of the devil, and he chose instead to walk away, saying “Father told me that in the day I should partake of the fruit thereof, I should surely die. I will not partake of it.” (see Moses 7:32,33)

(2) “The Lord called their name Adam” (Gen. 5:2; Moses 6:9) is used as an implied justification to suggest that 2 Ne 2:25 “Adam fell that men might be” refers to “Adam and Eve” fell that men might be. But the Moses and Genesis scriptures are both related in the context of referring to the generations of the descendants of our first parents, surnamed

“Adam”. We are all “of Adam” as referred to by God, meaning “of Adam *and* Eve”. Adam is referred to by name as an *individual* in the same chapter, v.1 when obeying God, then in v.2 as knowing his wife to beget Seth. Similarly Lehi in 2 Ne 2 is careful to distinguish between the individual acts of agency as manifest by “Adam” (v.22), “He” (twice in v. 22) “Eve” (v.18;), or the collective pair (“first parents”, v. 15, 21; “man”, “men”, v.16, 21; “Adam and Eve”, v.19; “they”, v.20, 21 v.23—three times. Therefore “Adam fell” in 2 Ne 2:25 can only be understood in context by attending the temple and realizing that Adam, the man, found himself in a *state of conflict* only when his wife told him “*Do you intend to obey ALL of Father’s commandments? I have partaken of this fruit and so will be cast out. And you will be left a lone man in the Garden.*” Similarly, Moses 6:48 refers to “Adam” and “his”. This is clearly not a reference to Adam *and* Eve. But objective reading of this verse also creates a severe contradiction in the common notion that God *intended* for us to fall, to be “made partakers of misery and woe”, because those are rather the key elements of Satan’s mission statement (see the next verse, Moses 6:49; 2 Ne 2:18). We can be assured that Satan—*malicious, but no fool*—knew exactly what he was doing, accomplished every facet of his intent, and did indeed bring about the wrath of God by creating a situation where all humanity became carnal, sensual, devilish, an enemy to God and subject to death. This was absolutely *not* God’s will and intent, because His way is to *consistently* prepare a path in which we might choose peace, justice, truth, (Moses 7:29-31) joy, (D&C 93:33) and Life Eternal. (Moses 1:39)

A second case of vague assignment of meaning is in the common assumption of God having some secret overriding plan beyond the plan of moral agency, based on the Moses 4:6 statement that Lucifer “knew not the mind of God” and the 2 Ne 2:24 statement “All things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things”. Such unfounded assumptions carry the disastrous consequence that God is somehow in our description not a God of integrity, principle and forthrightness; but rather must use stratagem, feint, manipulation and duplicity to accomplish his purposes. I believe that Lucifer fundamentally comprehends none of the righteousness, the goodness, the honesty and integrity of our God.

(3) Related to the assumption of infertility (discussed elsewhere in my papers), the key basis for rationalizing disobedience to God is in the apparent order of the commandments which placed procreation higher in priority than the commandment to not partake of the forbidden fruit, and this priority among (*intrinsically*—in this paradoxical view) conflicting commandments, made the first commandment a necessity and the second commandment a mere formality— acceptable to be ignored or even blatantly disobeyed.

But it is not altogether obvious that this assumed order of commandments is even correct, or at least not obvious that order is clearly a sound basis of argument: The referenced commandment in Moses 2:28 was declared *fulfilled* (Moses 2:30,31) and acceptable in the sixth day, prior to Adam’s conscious awakening due to the breath of Life at the beginning of the Lord’s Sabbath (Moses 3:7). Adam, still a lone individual, was then commanded to choose God in preference to Lucifer (Moses 3:16; “choose” see Moses 7:32,33) even prior to the formation of and marriage to Eve (Moses 3:21-25, with the inference that this marriage is where *the two of them* were commanded to multiply and replenish, and promised to receive joy and rejoicing in their posterity). The temple pre-endowment is significant here in

showing the newlyweds being promised the joy of parenthood, then reiterating to the pair that the one tree was *definitely off limits*. Eve demonstrates this understanding in Moses 4:8-9 *And the woman said unto the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; But of the fruit of the tree which thou beholdest in the midst of the garden, God hath said—Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.* Eve also significantly demonstrates that she **already** possesses the intrinsic moral agency (Moroni 7:15-19; Moses 7:32,33) as well as the capacity to discern good from evil when she (as portrayed in the pre-endowment) skeptically responds to Lucifer “*you, my ‘brother’, and come here to persuade me to disobey Father?*”

Ramifications of the Fortunate Fall theology

1) It becomes a “popular” theology to convey the social agenda that our church is actually a progressive church in its view of women.

- Henry B Eyring, Women’s Conference, March 29, 2014, from my own notes, the message of: “Eve's insight, inspiration and courage to do that which Adam was either unwilling or unable to do” (or similar phrasing).
- In the 2003 Deseret Book publication *Eve and the Choice Made in Eden*, Author Beverly Campbell devotes Chapter 3 to the topic “There was no other way”, and details authoritative statements from Brigham Young, J. Reuben Clark, Bruce R. McConkie, Boyd K. Packer, Dallin H. Oaks, Russell M. Nelson, Joseph Smith, all assuming the necessity of the fall for procreation.
- “*So we stand, if you want to talk about things on which Mormons stand across the river, if you will, from other Christian faiths, this is one of the most important—that Eve was not an airhead, she was not a murderess. She was, in fact, wise and courageous, and what she did pleased God.*” — Valerie Hudson Cassler, “The Two Trees”, FairMormon Conference August 5-6, 2010, Sandy, Utah

2) It becomes a paradoxical mainstay of our correlated theology

- “*Some people believe Adam and Eve committed a serious sin when they ate of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. However, latter-day scriptures help us understand that their Fall was a necessary step in the plan of life and a great blessing to all of us. Because of the Fall, we are blessed with physical bodies, the right to choose between good and evil, and the opportunity to gain eternal life. None of these privileges would have been ours had Adam and Eve remained in the garden.*” (*Gospel Principles*, chapter 6)
- The highly dramatic visual effects in the new crop of pre-endowment movies showing Adam and Eve seeking and receiving divine revelation to disobey God’s commandment in order to *enable* the blessing of procreation constitute further examples. This is in direct contradiction of D&C 130:20,21: *There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.*

3) Our Understanding of Moral Agency is severely compromised.

Moral agency was fully in place and active the moment our parents were set before the two trees and the consequences were explained: Joy in life — or — death. But this conclusion only comes when we believe God and disbelieve Lucifer.

But the paradoxical doctrine is summarized in Preach My Gospel, The Plan of Salvation (p.49 *emphasis* and [comments] added):

God is the Father of our spirits. We are literally His children, and He loves us. We lived as spirit children of our Father in Heaven before we were born on this earth. We were not, however, like our Heavenly Father, nor could we ever become like Him and enjoy all the blessings that He enjoys without the experience of living in mortality with a physical body.

[Mortality: humanity must sin, suffer and die—in this plan—apparently because that is the process God Himself went through. Lucifer’s blatant lies heard inside the temple: “for that is the way Father gained His knowledge” and “there is no other way” provide bookends to what I claim are delusional rationalizations that we use when believing Lucifer in preference to God. As we continue with p.49, note all the instances of the hypothetical, speculative and conjectural.]

Adam and Eve were the first of God’s children to come to the earth. God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were created in God’s image, with bodies of flesh and bones. While Adam and Eve were in the garden, they were still in God’s presence and could have lived forever. They lived in innocence, and God provided for their needs.

In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve their agency. He commanded them not to eat the forbidden fruit, or the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Obedying this commandment meant that they could remain in the garden, but they could not progress by experiencing opposition in mortality. They could not know joy because they could not experience sorrow and pain.

Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and they chose to do so. This was part of God’s plan. Because of this choice, they were cast from the garden and out of God’s physical presence. This event is called the Fall. Separation from God’s presence is spiritual death. Adam and Eve became mortal—subject to physical death, or separation of the body and spirit. They could now experience disease and all types of suffering. They had moral agency or the ability to choose between good and evil. This made it possible for them to learn and progress. It also made it possible for them to make wrong choices and to sin. In addition, they could now have children, so the rest of God’s spirit children could come to earth, obtain physical bodies, and be tested. Only in this way could God’s children progress and become like Him.

Astoundingly, the bottom line justification is a direct quote—mocking agency—from Lucifer himself, “there is no other way”. As a result of this murderous lie (for he is not capable of anything else – Jn 8:44), we find a theological paradox that God commanded, but there were, in common parlance “technical difficulties” preventing Him from being able to fulfill all the promises of his commandments (“that you may have joy and rejoicing in your posterity”), and

that he apparently had some other hidden intent (or plan) beyond the stated plan of moral agency. Commanding one thing and intending the opposite is normally referred to as “duplicity”. Since Father is absolutely not a liar, we should immediately adjust our perspective accordingly!