In the Beginning: Genesis 1-3 and its Significance to the Latter-day Saints

Dan Belnap
dan_belnap@byu.edu

Daniel L. Belnap
Brigham Young University - Provo

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub

Part of the Mormon Studies Commons

BYU ScholarsArchive Citation
Belnap, Dan and Belnap, Daniel L., "In the Beginning: Genesis 1-3 and its Significance to the Latter-day Saints" (2021). Faculty Publications. 5598.
https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/5598

This Book Chapter is brought to you for free and open access by BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
IN THE BEGINNING

GENESIS 1-3 AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE
TO THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

DANIEL L. BELNAP

This volume begins with the same event the Bible itself does—the Creation. The Creation narrative and the Garden of Eden narrative that immediately follows have been the subject of much study throughout the years. Over the past century, particular attention has been given to the similarities between it and other ancient Near Eastern Creation narratives. For Latter-day Saints, the Creation and Garden of Eden narratives play central roles in their worship practices, the narratives themselves laying down the plan of salvation God ordained for all his children. In this first chapter, Dan Belnap describes what creation meant to those of the ancient Near East and how that understanding continues to provide a template of salvation for God’s family. —DB & AS
The Creation narratives of Genesis 1–3 are arguably the most well-known Old Testament narratives. They make up the first six pages of the Bible, and they describe God bringing everything into existence. But beyond their location in the text, the narratives may also be used to set up an important but perhaps overlooked concept: the election of Israel and their foundational role in Christianity’s understanding of salvation.¹ For Latter-day Saints, these narratives are a primary component of our religious experience, while our additional scriptures (The Book of Moses and the Book of Abraham) provide unique insights into the significance and purpose of these events. And because we understand scripture to be more than historical documents, the principles of creation, the establishment of community, and the responsibilities given to Adam and Eve speak to us and our own place within the cosmos.

“THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM, AND VOID”: THE CREATION OF THE PHYSICAL COSMOS

Genesis 1 begins with a setting familiar to those who know ancient Near Eastern cosmology. According to verse 2, the precreative state (Hebrew ṭohû wābohû)² was one which had no distinctive shape or purpose yet. Translated in English as “without form, and void”, ṭohû wābohû does not

¹. C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 35: “Genesis 1–11 sets the stage for the mission of Israel to live as God’s treasured people and thereby to be the vehicle of blessing to the rest of the world.” Similarly, Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 25: “In the book of Genesis creation does not stand by itself. . . . Rather, as indicated by the position of the creation stories at the opening of the Bible, creation is a prologue to history. . . . Creation provides the background and setting for the vocation of God’s people.” See also Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Cambridge, MA: James Clarke and Co., 2012), 97: “A confirmation that Gen 1:2 anticipates redemptive themes, such as the crossing of the Red Sea, is found in Deuteronomy 32, a song about the ‘last days.’”

². This study employs transliteration diacriticals and spellings of Hebrew and Greek. While the author will be consistent in his usage, when directly quoting other sources he will revert to the cited author’s usage or format.
mean “nothing” or indicate an absence, but instead refers to a state in which material was present, but in an unorganized, unformed, state. The tohū wābohū is paralleled with “the deep” (t’hōm in Hebrew, abussos in Greek), reflecting the common ancient Near Eastern association of the sea or ocean with the unorganized material of this precreative state. Thus the Creation event opens with a sense of potential or expectation, a sense strengthened by what appears to be divine preparatory action: “and the spirit of God moved [brooded] over the waters.”

3. John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 29: “In [tohu’s] twenty occurrences (more than half in Isaiah), we find that it often describes a wilderness or wasteland (e.g., Deut. 32:10; Job 6:18, 12:24; Ps. 107:40). It can describe the results of destruction (Jer. 4:23). It is used to convey things that have no purpose or meaning (e.g., idols, Isa. 41:29, and those who make them, Isa. 44:9). All its uses can be consolidated in the notion of things that are of no purpose or worth. They lack order and function. It now becomes clear that the starting condition in Genesis 1:2, the pre-creation situation that describes nonexistence, is a condition that is not lacking material. Rather, it is a situation that is lacking order and purpose.” Also, John Day, *From Creation to Babel: Studies in Genesis 1–11* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 8–9: “It is clear that the word’s connotations in Biblical Hebrew range from the concrete ‘desert’ to the abstract ‘non-entity,’ the central meaning uniting these being that of ‘empty’ or ‘nothing.’ ‘Empty’ seems to be the meaning we have in Gen. 1:2. . . . Of course the world was not completely empty, since it was covered in water. What is meant is that the earth existed only in an inchoate state and was devoid of all its familiar features and inhabitants which are subsequently created in Genesis 1. D.T. Tsumura and Terry Fenton are right in saying that tohū wābohū in Gen. 1:2 has sometimes been wrongly understood as chaos. However, the term chaos is surely not inappropriately used of the raging waters that God has to do battle with in some parts of the Old Testament at the time of creation (e.g., Ps. 104:6–9) and which ultimately lies behind the waters of the deep in Gen. 1:2.”

4. David Tsumura, *Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 33: “The author’s intention in describing the earth in its initial state as tohu wabohu was not to present the earth as ‘the terrible, eerie, deserted wilderness’ but to introduce the earth as being ‘not yet’ normal . . . This interpretation of tohu wabohu (lit. ‘desert-like and empty’) as describing a bare state, a ‘desolate and uninhabited’ state, of the earth fits the literary structure of the entire chapter.” Seth D. Postell, *Adam as Israel: Genesis 1–3 as the Introduction to the Torah and Tanakh* (Cambridge, MA: James Clarke and Co., 2012), 97: “A confirmation that Gen
The actual creative process involving the shaping or organizing of the preexisting material begins as God speaks light into existence, thereby delineating the elemental states of light and dark, an act that typifies the creation process as God takes the undifferentiated and unformed precreation material and organizes or arranges the material via separation.\(^5\) The

1:2 anticipates redemptive themes, such as the crossing of the Red Sea, is found in Deuteronomy 32, a song about the “last days.” There, a cluster of terms from the Creation account—a cluster appearing nowhere else in the entire Hebrew Bible—describes Israel’s redemption using the same terms: “He found him in a desert land and in an uninhabitable (\textit{tohu}) howling wasteland, he surrounded him, he attentively considered him, he protected him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, brooding (\textit{yarakhef}) over its chicks, he carries him upon his pinions (Deut. 32:10–11).” See Michael DeRoche, “The \textit{rûaḥ ‘elōhim} in Gen 1:2c: Creation or Chaos?,” in \textit{Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie}, ed. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 67 (Sheffield, MA: JSOT Press, 1988), 303–18, who compares Genesis 1:2 and the \textit{ruach}, or “spirit,” of God stirring the waters to the role of the \textit{rûaḥ} in Genesis 8:1 and the drying of the waters following the flood and the dry land appearing in the Exodus 14:21, suggesting that one role of the \textit{ruaḥ} is announciatory in function, effectively indicating that the work of creation is about to commence: “The \textit{rûaḥ ‘elōhim} of Gen 1:2c refers to the impending creative activity of the deity . . . . It expresses Elohim’s control over the cosmos and his ability to impose his will upon it” (318).

5. Walton, \textit{Lost World}, 30: “To bārā’ something brings it into existence by giving it a role and function in an ordered system. . . . In this view, the result of bara is order. The roles and functions are established by separating and naming. These are the acts of creation.” See also Don Michael Hudson, “From Chaos to Cosmos: Sacred Space in Genesis,” in \textit{ZAW} 108 (1996), 87–97: “Sacred space, according to Eliade and others, is space that is separated from the sameness of the creative order by differentiating a place that is symbolically or ritually different from any place like it. . . . The introduction of sacred space into a predominantly profane world reflects the possibility for orientation. . . . Without a divinely appointed reference point in the profane world of relativity and sameness, humankind is left with no possibility of orienting himself or herself around that which is ‘wholly other’ and that which has the potential of transcending himself or herself in the mundane world of existence” and “differentiation and orientation provided humankind with the symbolic means to distinguish in the midst of sameness, orient himself or herself in the midst of potential wastelands, and thereby communicate ritually with the sacred world in which the gods resided” (90–91).
general concept of separation during creation seems clear with the broad function of establishing a sacred space wherein God and his creations will dwell in order to fulfill his purposes. While this broad differentiation is clear, the significance or function of this specific first, separating process is less clear. Some have suggested that this first separation or distinction with light and dark highlights the creation of time via alternating states of darkness and light. While this may be the case, the actual measurements of time are created later with the establishment of the heavenly bodies (such as the sun and the moon). If this first separation is not the presence of time, it is possible that the establishing of light reflects another purpose. Throughout the ancient Near East and the Bible, the presence of light indicates the presence of Deity. Moreover, the role of light in ritual processes throughout the ancient Near East suggest that light was understood as an energizing or vitalizing agent as well as a purifying one. These associations suggest that the creation of light can indicate direct, divine activity or the creation of an environment in which the divine may be directly and always present, an aspect of the cosmos necessary for the fulfilment of the plan of salvation.

---

6. In this paper, the term *cosmos*, derived from the Greek *kosmos*, is meant to refer to the organized state that is the result of creative labor, not necessarily the fully articulated ancient Greek usage. See Bernhard W. Anderson, *From Creation to New Creation: Old Testament Perspectives* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 27–8: “The Hebrew Bible does not have the equivalent of the Greek term *kosmos*, which suggests the view of the universe as a rationally constituted and self-sustaining structure of reality. Instead, it speaks of the relationship between the Creator and the creation, a relationship that is essentially that of the covenant. . . . The covenant, rather than a rational principle, is the ground of the unity of the creation. Hence psalmists exclaim that divine *heqesh* or covenant loyalty embraces all God’s works.” The theological nature of the biblical cosmos may be reflected in the principles outlined in Doctrine and Covenants 88:7–11, in which the relationship between the cosmos and Christ is outlined: “This is the light of Christ. As also he is in the sun, and the light of the sun, and the power thereof by which it was made. As also he is in the moon, and is the light of the moon, and the power thereof by which it was made; as also the light of the stars, and the power thereof by which they were made; and the earth also, and the power thereof, even the earth upon which you stand. And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; the light
With images of the divine presence in place, we are then told that God separated the precreation water and sustained that separation via the firmament. This act created a space in which the rest of the earth could be established, with land emerging and the seas gathered and bound in their place. Following the establishing of the boundaries of land, sea, and sky, God then named these physical locales earth, sea, and heaven. This act of naming may be understood as much a part of the creation process as the physical separation, because defining and naming provides order and meaning, assigning purpose in individualizing each aspect from the others. This twofold process of separating or distinguishing followed by the naming or identification of the object is repeated throughout the creative process and is often concluded with God’s declaration that the Creation to this point is “good.” More than merely an acknowledgment of what has happened, the declaration that the aspects of the Creation are which is in all things, which giveth life to all things, which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God who sitteth upon his throne.”

7. Norman Habel has pointed out the similarity between this sequence and the birth process. See Norman Habel, The Birth, the Curse and the Greening of the Earth: An Ecological Reading of Genesis 1–11, Earth Bible Series 1 (Sheffield, MA: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011), 31–33: “The implication of this reading that a womb/birth metaphor lies behind the imagery for the setting and appearance of Erets [earth] on day three may seem surprising, given the tendency of many interpreters to view *tehom* and the waters as evidence of primal chaos. That Erets has been viewed as a mother in some biblical passages is well known (Ps. 139:13–15). Job cries out, ‘Naked I came from my mother’s womb and naked I shall return there’ (Job 1:21). A primal birth image is explicit in passages such as Job 38:8 where sea comes forth from a primal womb to be clothed and contained by God. Immediately relevant is the imagery of Ps. 90:2 where the psalmist asserts that El, the creator God, was present before the mountains were born (*yld*) and before Erets and the inhabited world came to birth and was brought forth in labour (*chwl*). This passage quite explicitly speaks of the origin of Erets at the hands of the maker/midwife in terms of a birthing process—a tradition that I suggest is also reflected in Genesis 1. . . . If we recognize the validity of the birth metaphor, the progression from Gen. 1:2–10 becomes clear. A form, like an embryo, is located in the waters of the deep. These waters suggest a placid womb rather than a raging sea. Light and space are created so this form can be revealed. At the ‘birth’ moment, the waters separate/burst and—at the invitation of Elohim—the form appears/emerges out of the waters as a newborn child. God names the form Erets, looks at her and responds with
good represents a fundamental and crucial observation that the objects noted are fulfilling their divine purpose and function. It represents the intrinsic integrity making up the cosmic entities and thereby the underlying order and organization of the cosmos as a whole.

8. Thus, this process (differentiating, naming, and declaring as good) may also be understood as a revelatory one. As Habel points out that the verb “to appear” in the clause “cause dry land to appear” may also be translated “be revealed.” “The Niphal form of this verb used here is used elsewhere when God or an angel of God is revealed or ‘appears’. In Gen. 18:1, ‘Yhwh appeared to Abraham (cf. Gen 12:7; 35:1). The language of God’s theophanic appearances to humans is here, in Gen. 1:9–10, associated with the appearance of Erets, highlighting the climactic significance of the event . . .” Habel, The Birth, 31–32. In creation, God is revealing his purposes.

9. Rolf Knierim, “Cosmos and History in Israel’s Theology,” in Horizons in Biblical Theology 3 (1981): 59–124, particularly 87: “The created world-order has certain qualitative notions which explicate Yahweh’s relationship to and presence in it. The fact of creation out of chaos alone represents more than a merely quantitative event. It is a good event. The priestly formulation according to which the whole creation is ‘very good’ in God’s judgment (Gen. 1:31) is not superficial because the word ‘good’ is a common word. It is the most profound formulation which in essence includes all else that can be said. It cannot be said better. And it is a fundamental theological statement about the world. This is goodness is not only true for the order of creation in the beginning. It is also true for all the time throughout which this order exists in accordance with its beginning.” Similarly, John H. Walton, Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 169: “The recurring formula in Genesis 1—’it was good’—offers this same assessment of the creative acts that brought order to the cosmos: the cosmos now functioned well. The evidence that this is the nuance of the Hebrew word tob (which admittedly has a wide semantic range) comes from the context. Contextually, it is useful to consider the nuance that the word has by asking what it would look like for something not to be good. Fortunately, the context does indicate something that is not good: ‘It is not good for man to be alone’ (Gen. 2:18). The word tob in this good concerns proper functioning: it is not a negative assessment of craftsmanship or moral purity. We can therefore infer that the recurring assessment that things were good in Genesis 1 does not refer to the absence of corruption or flaw. It instead it is an affirmation that the functions were set to operate according to their design.” Habel suggests a more intimate aspect as well, see Habel, The Birth, 32: “The ‘good’ that Elohim sees in Erets is not ‘good’ in some dualistic or moral sense. ‘Good’ is Elohim’s response
At this point, what may be deemed the first stage of the Creation, the formation and ordering of the basic physical environment of land, sea, and sky, is completed. As noted earlier, the Creation narrative describes not just the material organization but the establishment of their function as well. It is this aspect that now comes to the fore with the beginning of the second stage of the Creation, the ordering of life. Just as in the first stage, this one too begins with differentiation and delineation as vegetation is divided into three categories: grass, herbs, and fruit trees. Further differentiation and complexity are made by the injunction that each is to produce seed after its own kind, meaning that while all three may be the same type (i.e., plant life in general as opposed to other creations), each plant could be differentiated from others, thereby rendering the nascent cosmos incapable of returning to its undifferentiated, precosmic state. In this, the command “after its own kind” serves a similar function as the naming did in the first stage, and, as in the first stage, this level of differentiation is also recognized by God that it was “good,” highlighting the order and purpose of the Creation with its attendant limitations, prescriptions, designs, and given creative powers in each respective sphere and function.

Though the next aspect of the Creation process, the formation and placement of the astronomical bodies, may appear to be a backward step from the physical, material organization, the Creation narrative is not concerned with our modern concept of the universe as cosmos where earth is but a small and seemingly insignificant piece of the equation. Instead, all focus is on the creation of this earth within the larger cosmos. The earth is the focus and thus the establishment of the other astronomical bodies is not meant to place the earth within a larger cosmic context of galaxies and so forth, but to define the earth’s temporal cosmos or the ordering of time on the earth. The triad of sun, moon, and stars, the reader is told, would be used to designate night and day, as opposed to light and dark, as well as seasons, days, and years. Complementing their function as time measures, the astronomical objects also function as “signs.” What is meant exactly to what is seen, experienced in the moment of its appearance. A similar idiom is used to describe the response of Moses’ mother when he is born. When she first bonds with the child ‘she sees he is good’ (Ex. 2:1). Elohim beholds Earth emerge from the waters below and ‘sees Earth is good.’
is not clear, but it hints of a function useful primarily to humankind and highlights the anthropocentric purpose of the cosmos within this narrative. Humans will thus constitute the main purpose behind God’s creations. Just as the vegetation all reflects types useful to humanity, so too the astronomical bodies as signs, or semiotic devices representing other concepts, find meaning in their relationship to humankind. If there is any independent meaning of the stars and planets outside of human comprehension, it is simply not indicated in the text. And it is this function, when performing properly, that God declares is “good.”

With both space and time now sufficiently differentiated, life is created in the sea and in the air, the text further differentiating this life into (1) the ‘great tannîm,’ (2) all living things which the waters bring forth, and (3) all winged life (specifically avian forms). Immediately following the emergence of this original triad of moving life, another triad is described

10. The great tannîm, translated here as “whales,” is translated elsewhere in the Old Testament as “dragon (twenty-one times), “serpent” (three times), “whale” (three times), and “sea monster” (one time), these other translations reflecting another creation tradition, often found in the poetic and prophetic material of the biblical text, that depicts the cosmos as a result of a battle between God and a monster representing the unorganized material. In this tradition, the carcass of the monster-as-unorganized-material is used to construct the cosmos. This tradition is conspicuously missing from the Genesis version, though this most likely reflects the writer(s) or editor(s) desire to emphasize God as one who transcends all aspects of the cosmos, who is not constantly threatened by existential disorder. Thus, the tannîm, the personification of unorganization elsewhere, is here rendered as simply another type of living animal. See Mary K. Wakeman, *God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1973); also Patrick D. Miller Jr., *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); Millard Lind, *Yahweh Is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in the Ancient Israel* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980); John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985). For both an excellent review of this imagery and material on the influence of this imagery beyond the Hebrew Bible, see Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For a Book of Mormon usage, see Daniel Belnap, “I Will Contend with Them That Contendeth with Thee: The Divine Warrior in Jacob’s Speech of 2 Nephi 6–10,” in *Journal of Book of Mormon & Restoration Scripture 17*, nos. 1–2 (2008): 20–39.
consisting of the “beasts of the field,” cattle, and nonmammals that walk on land (reptiles, amphibians, and so forth). While “creeping things,” or the nonmammals that walk on land, suggests differentiation of type, the other two suggest differentiation by function—namely, nondomesticated versus domesticated—again highlighting the anthropocentric purpose of the Creation. With these two orderings, life is now present in the three environments of the cosmos: the earth, the sea, the sky, and all of it is functioning properly and differentiated one from another, thereby receiving the divine acknowledgment that it is “good.”

The final ordering is the making of man. This ordering differs from the earlier ones as the instruction is now collaborative, with the inclusion of the first-person plural “let us” rather than singular God (Genesis 1:26). Though it may be tempting to read this as an indication that Israel worshipped more than one deity, it appears to reflect their understanding of the function of the divine assembly that was led by God and is attested throughout the Old Testament, particularly in its role in the calling of a prophet.¹¹ In this final ordering, the unique position of humankind is noted by the inclusion of other divine beings in this assembly. Stress is placed on the form of humankind, “let us make man in our own likeness and in our own image.” While the exact nature of these clauses has been discussed for literally millennia, the meaning is relatively straightforward. The first term, šelem, or image, denotes an actual, physical representation and is used elsewhere to designate an idol. In Genesis 5:3, the term is used to describe the similarity between Adam and his son Seth, highlighting the usage of the term to denote similarity in physical form.¹² Thus, both terms


¹². Day, From Creation to Babel, 13–14: “Traditionally, for many centuries in Christian theology it was believed that the image implied a spiritual likeness between God and humanity. However, the word šelem, ‘image,’ is characteristically used of physical images in the Old Testament. . . . The Hebrew word for ‘image’ is also employed by P of Seth’s likeness to Adam (Gen. 5:3), following a
indicate that ancient Israel understood God to have at least looked like man, but the greater ontological implication, that similarity of form indicates similarity of type (i.e., that God is the same type of being as human-kind) is often a more contentious implication for students of the bible. For Latter-day Saints, though, this ontological relationship lies at the center of our identity as children of God. And, as we shall see, it informs our reading of both the Creation narrative and the Garden of Eden narrative.

As equally important was the function or responsibility that humanity was to have: “let them have dominion over the flesh of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26). This function is reinforced in God’s blessing over the primordial pair: “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:28). As noted earlier, the blessing, be fruitful and multiply, was associated with entities that moved of their own volition, i.e., animal life, but the additional instruction to subdue and have dominion separates humankind from animal, suggesting that humankind would have not only the ability to move under their own power, but to be aware of one’s decisions and choose knowingly. It also further reinforces the divine similarities between humankind and God, as repetition of Genesis 1’s statement that humanity was created in the likeness of God (Gen. 5:1), which further supports the notion that a physical likeness was included in P’s concept.” See also Anderson, From Creation to New Creation, 14: “One should take the word translated “image” (ṣelem) much more concretely than is often done by those who attenuate its meaning the “spiritual” part of human nature, or, in Greek fashion, to the “soul” as distinguished from the “body.” Elsewhere the Hebrew word refers to something concrete and visible, . . . but the main import of the statement about the imago Dei is not just to define human nature in relation to God but to accent the special function that God has assigned human beings in the creation. Human beings, male and female, are designed to be God’s representatives, for they are created and commissioned to represent or “image” God’s rule on earth. To be made in the image of God is to be endowed with a special task.”
humanity is given authority akin to that of the Creator himself, as well as acting upon that authority as God did during the earlier creative periods.\footnote{13} Difficult for some is the meaning of the verbs “subdue” and “have dominion over” (Genesis 1:28). While the two are used elsewhere to describe the total power of one over another, at least one reference uses the same designation to describe construction overseers, which suggests the terms did not necessarily mean tyrannical domination, but were used to describe one who was placed over another to monitor work progress. This perspective allows for these verbs to be seen through a lens of compassionate authority, a characteristic of leadership Israel was expected to demonstrate both in their relationships with their fellow humans and in their relationship with the earth itself.\footnote{14} Regardless, it does not appear that humankind was simply given carte blanche over the rest of creation, but instead God gave humanity heavy responsibilities similar to his own and, having done so, he then declares that the Creation to this point was “very good” (Genesis 1:31).\footnote{15}

\footnote{13} Moreover, the blessing to be fruitful and multiply and its attendant responsibilities to subdue and have dominion over the earth are repeated later in the covenant established between God and the patriarchs and their descendants, Israel (Genesis 13:14–17, 15:4–5; see also Numbers 32:22, 29; Joshua 18:1). These in turn suggest that just as humankind was to have dominion over the earth, so Israel was expected to continue the purposes of the work of creation, having responsible stewardship over the rest of humankind.

\footnote{14} Perhaps related to this responsibility was the recognition by Israel that the land was God’s over which Israel was to be the steward. It is also possible that the blessing or responsibility reflects an aspect of conflict creation imagery, but instead of God as divine warrior, it is humankind who must subdue and exercise dominion over the remaining chaotic forces and thereby continue to maintain the cosmos.

\footnote{15} Day, \textit{From Creation to Babel}, 15: “The verbs used here, \textit{kabash}, ‘subdue,’ and \textit{rada}, ‘have dominion over,’ may at first sound rather harsh; . . . however, immediately afterwards in Genesis God commands both humans and animals to exist on a vegetarian diet (Gen. 1:29–30), so it is clear that no ruthless dominion is intended at all but rather a benign rule over the natural order, what we should nowadays refer to as a stewardship over creation.” It would appear that this responsibility is for both male and female, see Habel, \textit{The Birth}, 38–39: “The implementation of the joint decision to ‘make’ humans in the tselem of Elohim is described in poetic language. The new dimension of this divine act is the...
One last differentiation concludes this first period of creation—the designation of the Sabbath over other time delineations and one in which God rests from his earlier activities. Though it is often assumed that the mention of God’s rest reflects divine inactivity, the narrative suggests that there is not so much a cessation of work as there is a change in the type of work or purpose of the work as God now blesses and sanctifies, acts that not only apply to the specific time of the Sabbath, but presumably to the entire creation up to this point.  

The act of sanctification, based on the term qdš, is often understood as a “setting apart” as objects sanctified are assigned a new position or function apart from similar objects. Yet the adjectival form is often translated as “holy” and reflects a divine status in the given object. Thus, the act of sanctification is the moving of an object or item to a divine state. Moreover, the English word holy carries with it the sense of completeness or wholeness; therefore sanctification can be understood as the process by which a thing enters into a divine state by being whole or complete. Thus it could be understood that the Creation was not truly complete until it had been sanctified, a process similar to that of a temple dedication. Scholars have long noted the relationship between the Creation and its culminating designation of both male and female as bearers of the tselem. Both male and female humans bear this royal image and have the mandate to rule all other living creatures. There is no indication of male rulers being superior in any way to female rulers; they are separated by sex but both bear the tselem that gives them the capacity to dominate.”

16. S. D. McBride, “Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1–2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch,” in God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 3–41: “This day of silent divine rest is a consummation of all that has gone before because it inaugurates God’s residence within the cosmic temple.” This implies that God’s creation is now not only a fit habitation for his children, but also for himself. Habel suggests that the Sabbath marks the transition from preparation to performance. Habel, The Birth, 34: “At this point in the narrative [the blessing over the Creation] a divine blessing is introduced, a key factor in sustaining the creation process. To bless (barak) is to impart power. In this instance, that power activates a capacity to procreate and ‘multiply on Erets.’” Whether his conclusion is accurate in terms of ability to reproduce, his observation that God’s blessing on the Sabbath was a crucial, necessary next step in the creation process appears to be correct.
Sabbath, and the construction and subsequent dedication of the tabernacle/temple. In a similar manner, the Creation may be understood as a priestly activity enacted by God as priest.\textsuperscript{17}

The verb used to describe the act of dividing or separating the different creation constituencies (light from dark, waters from waters, and so forth), \textit{hibdil}, is also used to describe the dividing up of the sacrificial animals following their slaughter; thus God and priest performed the same creative, cosmic act, albeit in different settings. But it wasn’t just priests who reflect God as creator/sanctifier. Throughout Leviticus and Deuteronomy, Israel was exhorted to be holy even as God was holy. As noted above, the Hebrew term for holy is \textit{qds}, but the meaning or usage of the term in any particular scriptural passage depended upon which version of \textit{qds} was used. The most common form is the adjective \textit{qodeš}, yet a select number of objects are designated as \textit{qādōš}, used to describe objects or individuals who are not just holy but have the dynamic quality to move objects into a divine

\textsuperscript{17} Much has been written about this relationship. In particular, see Gordon Wenham, “Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,” in \textit{I Studied Inscriptions from before the Flood}, ed. by R. Hess and D.T. Tsumura, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 4 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399–404. See also Moshe Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in \textit{Melanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles}, ed. A. Caquot and M. Delcor, AOAT (Kevelaer, Germany: Verlag Butzon & Bercker Kevelaer/Neukirchener Verlag Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1981), 501–12. As for God as priest, see Robert B. Coote and David Robert Ord, \textit{In the Beginning: Creation and the Priestly History} (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 57: “A main function of the priesthood was, as Leviticus 10:10 expresses it, to ‘distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the clean and the unclean.’ The centrality of this function could hardly be overstated. ‘Distinguish’ is exactly what God did in the first act of Creation: in Hebrew, God ‘distinguished’ light and darkness. The priestly tradition understood this distinguishing, this separating, to be integral to the inceptive divine act.” See also J. Levenson, \textit{Creation and the Persistence of Evil} (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988), 127: “God functions like an Israelite priest, making distinctions, assigning things to their proper category, and assessing their fitness and hallowing the Sabbath. . . . As a result, the creative ordering of the world has become something that humanity can not only witness and celebrate, but something in which it can also take part.” The apparent priestly orientation to Genesis 1 has led many to believe that the chapter represents a text written by a priestly source (see more below).
state. Not surprisingly, God is the number one entity described as qādôš, but Israel too is expected to be qādôš, like their God.\footnote{E. Jan Wilson, “Holiness” and “Purity” in Mesopotamia, Alter Orient und Altes Testament 237 (Kevelaer, Germany: Butzon & Bercker; Neukirchen-Vluyn; Neukirchen, 1994), 87–88. For more discussion on the distinction of these terms, see Gaye Strathearn, “Holiness to the Lord” and Personal Temple Worship,” in The Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament, ed. D. Kelly Ogden, Jared W. Ludlow, and Kerry Muhlestein (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2009), 219–32.} Certainly Israel’s observance of the Sabbath reflected these creation activities. Just as God was not inactive, so too Israel participated in sanctioned activities associated only with the Sabbath. For instance, on the Sabbath burnt offerings were doubled and the bread of the presence, which would have lain on a table inside the sanctuary all week, was consumed and replaced. These, of course, were priestly activities, but the general congregation also participated in Creation activities; namely, the activity of assembly.

This particular activity does not appear at first glance to be referenced in the Creation narrative, yet it seems to be present in the first verse of Genesis 2, which sums up the creative process so far by stating that heaven and earth were finished, “and all the host of them.” While the idea that heaven and earth are finished or completed makes sense, the last subject, the “host” and its relationship to the verb is less so, as the term itself is used almost exclusively to describe a gathered convocation or assembly. It is possible that it refers to a final organizing act in which the entire host of heaven and earth was established into a social/ecclesiastical structure. Such an event is recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 121 when the council of God assembled and “ordained” the set functions of the cosmos.

This particular event may be what is alluded to in Job 38 among the rhetorical questions God asked of Job: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth. . . . Who hath laid the measures thereof . . . or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the cornerstone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4–7). In this reference, the divine assembly is described as singing and praising as God organizes the earth, which, coupled with the rest of the sanctification, again may suggest that the establishment of the Sabbath reflects a
dedicatory event. If this reading is correct, the Sabbath was meant to be a recognized period that harmonized the divine and mortal communities both at the time of creation and in later historical time. Either way, the

19. Day, From Creation to Babel, 12–13: “The dominant view nowadays is that there is a reference to the heavenly court which God addressed (cf. Job 38:7, where ‘all the sons of God shouted for joy’ at the time of the creation, though admittedly it does not say that God consulted them. . . . It might be objected that in Gen. 1:28 it was only God, not the heavenly court, who actually created humanity. However, it is arguable that the momentous decision to create humanity is envisaged as a joint act between God and his heavenly council, even if was only God himself who finally enacted the decision.” Lorenzo Snow suggested that this event was the dedication of the earth and the shout was in fact the Hosanna Shout. See Jacob W. Olmstead, “From Pentecost to Administration: A Reappraisal of the History of the Hosanna Shout,” in Mormon Historical Studies 2, no. 2 (2001): 28: “On 2 July 1899, during a solemn assembly in the Salt Lake Temple, the Prophet Lorenzo Snow was the first to teach that the shout was linked with Old Testament concepts. He stated that at the creation of the world when “all the sons of God shouted for joy,” Job was describing the first shout of ‘Hosanna’ (see Job 38:107).”

20. Weinfeld, “Sabbath,” 502–3: “The fact that with the completion of the instructions for the building the Tabernacle in P. there appears a commandment on the Sabbath (Ex. 31:12–17), shows also the connection which existed between Creation and the Building of the Temple. Indeed, this connection is well expressed in the congruence which is found between the description of the completion of the Tabernacle in Exodus. Gen. 1:1–2:3 and Ex. 39:1–40:33 are typologically identical. Both describe the satisfactory completion of the enterprise commanded by God, its inspection and approval, the blessing and the sanctification which are connected with it.” See also Postell, Adam as Israel, 113: “In one real sense, the garden serves as the prototypical reality of which the tabernacle serves only as a copy or a type. The tabernacle and its operation are permeated with an aroma of Eden. A link is forged between God’s creation’s purposes and the construction of the tabernacle, whereby the Mosaic tabernacle and its priesthood perpetuate, albeit imperfectly, the ‘sanctuary’ in Eden and its ‘priesthood.’” See also Walton, Lost World, 50: “Solomon spent seven years building the house to be used as the temple of God in Jerusalem. When the house was complete, however, all that existed was a structure, not a temple. It was ready to be a temple, but it was not yet functioning like a temple, and God was not dwelling in it. . . . What constituted the transition from a structure that was ready to be a temple to an actual functioning temple? How did the house become a home? This is an important question because there is a comparison to be drawn if Genesis 1 is indeed a temple text. We find that in both the Bible and
establishment of the Sabbath was not a period of inactivity but a period of sanctifying, completing events that made it possible for the next stage of the cosmos to begin.\(^{21}\)

---

the ancient Near East there is an inauguration ceremony that formally and ceremonially marks the transition from physical structure to functioning temple. . . . In that inauguration ceremony, the functions of the temple are proclaimed, the functionaries are installed and rituals are begun as God comes down to inhabit the place that has been prepared by his instruction. It is thus no surprise that in Genesis 1 we find the proclamation of functions and the installation of functionaries.”

---

21. Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah*, ASOR diss 2 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975), 179–80: “What is the nature of divine rest in the Hebrew Bible? In the ancient Near Eastern literature, we have noted a range of activities (and inactivity) that were involved in rest: from peaceful sleep, to leisure time for entertainment and banquets, to sovereign rule. Some have interpreted the rest in Genesis 1 as representing disengagement and the enjoyment of relaxation. Thus, Levenson comments that the text ‘leaves us with an impression of the deity in a state of mellow euphoria, benignly fading out the world that he has finished and pronounced “very good.”’ J. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 109. It should be noted, however, that the ‘disengagement’ form of rest in the ancient Near East is consistently based either in polytheism (e.g., social activities among and entertainment with other gods) or in the belief that the gods had humanlike needs and desires (e.g., sleep or sexual activity). . . . In fact, however, although the idea of divine rest in the ancient Near Eastern [sic] includes retirement as one possibility, other texts examined above showed rest as the freedom to rule. In the Hebrew Bible, Psalm 132 provides a key passage, in which not only is the temple identified as the resting place of Yahweh but we also find rest identified with rue, for in the temple he sits enthroned. In this sense, divine rest is not primarily an act of disengagement but an act of engagement. No other divine rest occurs in the Hebrew Bible than the rest that is associated with his presence in his temple.” See also, Habel, *From Creation*, 41: ‘The cosmos is now complete and Elohim can rest (shabat) with creation. But that rest apparently does not mean inaction or taking a vacation: the use of bara’ in Gen. 2:3 indicates continued divine action. And, as van Wolde suggests, this verse means that God made the seventh day by ‘separating’ it and setting it apart of the other days.” Ellen van Wolde, “Why the Verb Bara’ Does Not Mean ‘To Create’ in Genesis 1.1–2.41,” in *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 34, no.1 (2009): 22: “Elohim also blesses and sanctifies the day that celebrates completion—Elohim invests that day with a power comparable to the power of procreation given to living creatures of Erets. . . . Prior to that day, blessing has been dispensed to activate life as such. Now time is blessed with the inherent
“THERE WAS NOT A MAN TO TILL THE GROUND”: GENESIS 2–3 AND THE CREATION OF THE SOCIAL COSMOS

This next stage of the creative process is described in Genesis 2–3 and focuses on the localized events experienced in the Garden of Eden. Because of differences in narrative, setting, and even terminology—all particularly highlighting the direct, personal interaction between God and man—it has been presumed that chapters 2 and 3 have been written by another author or redactor representing a different Creation narrative (known as J because of the preponderance of the title Jehovah).\(^\text{22}\) For Latter-day Saints, the differences between the two narratives has been understood to reflect two different temporal periods of the Creation, a premortal organization by which the spiritual reality and relationship of all things was established before their physical creation and arrangement.

Whether or not this explanation is the correct one as to the origin of these two different narratives, it does highlight the intended relationship between them, for, even if they are two separate narrative traditions, at some point someone(s) believed them to be complementary rather than contrasting. And, in fact, the narrative elements mentioned above do not so much highlight a different physical creation as much as they highlight the creation of the “social” cosmos.\(^\text{23}\)

---

\(^{22}\) As noted earlier, it is commonly assumed that Genesis 1 was written under priestly influence and reflects priestly concepts and thus is known as “P” source.

\(^{23}\) Eckart Otto, “Paradieserzählung Genesis 2–3, Eine nachpriesterschriftliche Lehrerzählung in ihrem religionshistorischen Kontext,” in *Jedes Ding hat seine Zeit*, ed. Otto Kaiser, BZAW 241 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996), 167–92: “Not only is Genesis 2:7 terminologically tied to Genesis 1, Genesis 1:27 contains the ‘fact’ of the creation of man, whereas following up on Genesis 2:7 the ‘how’ is developed” (183–84). Postell, *Adam as Israel*, 18: “Otto’s words point to overriding compositional intentions that go beyond any putative and contradictory sources. Moreover, the fact that Genesis 2–3 is aware of the ‘priestly’ materials and even includes vocabulary classically assigned to ‘P’ undermines Wellhausen’s theory both in terms of his understanding of the chronological relationship of ‘J’ to ‘P’
J begins in Genesis 2:5, where the reader is told that no plant life yet existed because “the Lord God (Jehovah Elohim) had not caused it to rain upon the earth and there was not a man to till the ground.” The requirement of both God and mortal action to bring forth this aspect of creation marks a new stage of the creation, one in which male and female are necessary participants in the further completion of the cosmos, a requirement that was implied, but not explicit, in Genesis 1. In light of this new significance to humankind, it is not surprising to find the description of Adam’s physical emergence as first and foremost in this second creation narrative. His creation consisted of two parts: that which came from the earth, and the vitality or living essence—namely, the breath of life, which is received directly from God himself, an understanding of man which builds upon the relationship between man and God established first in Genesis 1. Whereas there the reader is told that man was in the image and likeness of God, now the reader finds that man’s physical makeup is infused by the divine breath of God.

Differentiation continues in this narrative as the earth itself is divided into geographical areas, beginning with Eden, the garden of God. Further

and in terms of the notion of clearly identifiable and distinguishable literary criteria used to distinguish one hypothetical source from another.” Similarly, Walton, Lost World, 69: “In Genesis 1:2, an inchoate cosmos is described, whereas an inchoate earth is described in Genesis 2:5–6. . . . Genesis 2 explains how humans function in sacred space and on its behalf (in contrast to Genesis 1, which addressed how sacred space functioned for humanity)”; and Day, From Creation to Babel, 24–25: “The account in Gen. 2:4b–3:24 is often spoken of as the second Creation account in Genesis, following on that of P in Gen. 1:1–2:4a. This is true, but the second account very much centers on the Garden of Eden and the first man and woman, and apart from that there is very little on the creation of the world.” In all of these cases, there is an awareness that Genesis 2 is not merely another tradition, but describes the next stage of the creation event, the creation of society.

24. David Tsumura, Creation and Destruction: A Reappraisal of the Chaoskampf Theory in the Old Testament (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 127: “The situation in 2:5–6 as a whole is simply this: Because of the lack of rain, there was no plant life on the earth, while the ed-water [precosmic water] was flooding out of the earth to water, that is, inundate, the entire surface of the land, which was only part of the earth. The problem here was not the lack of water, but the lack of adequate control of water by man for the purpose of agriculture.”
geographical areas are designated by the four rivers that flow from Eden, the rivers themselves presumably associated with rivers in the ancient Near East. But unlike the earlier differentiations, these do not signify new physical objects or states. Instead, they represent what could be called social space, or space that indicates their social function—in this case, inhabited areas of the ancient Near East. The designation of a garden in Eden suggests that it too may be understood as social space, in that gardens are planned environments to indicate prestige or other social dynamics.

Further delineation of social space follows with the introduction of two particular trees whose functions are socially oriented: the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The function of these trees lay at the center of the Garden of Eden narrative, acting as the catalyst to the next stage of the cosmos. With man's placement within the garden and the instruction given concerning his responsibilities regarding the garden, Adam is told that the fruit of all the trees may be eaten, except for the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the reason being that Adam would die from doing so:

16b. Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:  
17. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

This injunction scene has been most commonly understood as the narrative device by which evil is introduced. For Christians, it creates the tension

25. The focus on socially recognized spaces has led some to note the relationship between the Genesis 2–3 narrative and those of the patriarchs. See Postell, Adam as Israel, 90–91: “Scholars have noticed inner-textual parallels between Adam and Abraham. Not only does the text thematically link Abram to Adam, but Genesis 15–16 appears to be an intentional recapitulation of Adam’s story in Genesis 2–3. . . . First, in both passages the central figure undergoes a deep and divinely induced slumber. Second, both passages provide homogenous geographical information regarding the boundaries of a divinely provided land. Third, while Genesis 2 does not mention a covenant as does Genesis 15, it is clearly covenantal in nature.” Interestingly, in the Book of Abraham, no nomenclature is mentioned (see Abraham 5:10), perhaps reflecting its earlier, pre-Israelite origin.
by which the Fall begins, as Adam’s hubris will lead him to eat of the fruit and therefore no longer be able to remain in the garden. For Latter-day Saints, the passage creates difficulty as it appears to contradict the earlier instructions to multiply and replenish the earth. This is a unique perspective in two ways. First, it requires a reading in which the primordial couple are not able to bear children while in the garden. Second, it implies that humankind was not meant to be in the garden permanently under these conditions. While these two perspectives are particularly influenced by latter-day scripture, the Book of Mormon and the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price (both of which will later be discussed in greater detail), at least the latter may also have grounding in the Hebrew text itself.26

Though often understood as merely prohibitive, the divine injunction is our first indication that humankind possesses individual agency. Syntactically the formation of the commandment is similar to that of conditional oaths in which an individual declares what will happen if they engage in

26. Though not discussed earlier because of the approximate similarities between the Genesis version and the Moses account found in the Pearl of Great Price, in fact the Moses version has reflected a number of differences. First, the inclusion of Moses 1 and Moses’s three encounters with supernatural entities changed the function of the Creation narrative. Though the narrative itself remained approximately the same (physical creation followed by social creation), the purpose of the narrative is one which emphasizes the calling of Moses and his work similar to that of the creators rather than the further cosmological ordering through the emergence of Israel. The Moses account has also suggested a unified source, rather than the two sources noted among biblical scholars. One particular element that the Moses account adds is a Christological meaning to the Creation. In Moses 1 we find that Moses’s work will be similar to the work of God’s Only Begotten, through whom God created the biblical cosmos. Fronting the introduction of the serpent to the Garden of Eden, the Moses account recounts the premortal rebellion of the adversary in which Satan sought to overthrow the preeminent position of Christ while simultaneously doing away with individual agency, at least for those other than himself. Moses’ version of the injunction is also different from the biblical version, though not thematically. Instead, the Moses’ version emphasizes even more the role of agency in the injunction: “But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat, 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 3:17, emphasis added).
the behavior either allowed or disallowed (covenant language). Such formations are more than simple injunctions, and recognize the agency of the individual (but counting on fidelity, or the covenant breaker will die). Similarly, here, while Adam is told not to eat the fruit, he is also told what will happen if he does, which emphasizes the role of Adam’s agency rather than merely restricting his behavior. Moreover, the conditional nature of the instruction gives Adam knowledge that allows his choice to have efficacy. Such instruction allows for Adam to disregard the instruction if he is willing to die and the fact that Adam does make this choice later suggests that he had weighed the consequences and decided that death is preferable, perhaps even valued, rather than remaining alone.

Yet the consequences of Adam’s act in this regard are preceded by a number of events that both develop Adam’s and Eve’s awareness and exercising of agency and accentuate their roles as beings like God who bring about cosmos.\(^{27}\) The first such act is Adam’s naming the animals. According to verse 19, God has them brought before Adam “to see what [Adam] would call them.” Like God who had named the components of the physical cosmos, thus differentiating and giving meaning to the components, so now Adam differentiated each creature from one another, thereby establishing their place in the nascent cosmos.\(^{28}\) The act also reinforced Adam’s responsibilities to care for the cosmos given both in Genesis 1 and earlier

---

27. Walton, *Lost World*, 106–7: “I would propose the following line of logic: Since there are a couple of contexts in which šmr here favors sacred service, and ‘ibd is likely to refer to sacred service as to agricultural tasks. . . . If the priestly vocabulary in Genesis 2:15 indicates the same kind of thinking, the point of caring for sacred space should be seen as much more than landscaping or even priestly duties. Maintaining order made one a participant with God in the ongoing task of sustaining the equilibrium God had established in the cosmos. . . . This combines the subduing and ruling of Genesis 1 with the ‘bd and šmr of this chapter.”

28. Ziony Zevit, *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 131: “This episode about the formation and naming of animals is significant for a number of reasons. . . . Practically speaking, this involved the man’s being able to sort out the animals and to create logical categories into which they would fit, to distinguish monkeys from himself, and dogs from cats, from camels, from horses, from donkeys. The ability to create categories under which everything that existed could be filed was considered.
in chapter 2 by establishing a relationship between Adam and the animals. Finally, the event also provides Adam the opportunity to recognize that the cosmos is incomplete. Before his bringing the animals before Adam, God states that it is not good that Adam be alone, yet the organization of Eve takes place only after the animals are named and the deficiency is made obvious. In other words, it is not enough for God to pronounce that Adam alone is ‘not good,’ Adam himself needs to know and recognize his incompleteness, implying that this stage of creation is not completely “good” without Eve.

29. Habel, *The Birth*, 54: “It is perhaps significant that this partner is called a ‘helper,’ a term also used of God in the Hebrew Scriptures (Exod. 18:4; Deut. 33:7; Ps. 70:5). This lack of a suitable partner and ‘helper’ represents the final absence in the primordial world that needs to be rectified. The fulfillment of this lacuna will bring the primordial world to completion . . . the ‘helper’ will be the culmination of this creation process in Eden.”

30. Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 129–30: “Freedman argues that ‘-z-r, the three-consonant root of ‘eẑer reflects two original, distinctive roots. The first, most frequently attested in biblical Hebrew, is ‘-z-r, with an original ‘a’ayin, meaning ‘rescue/save/help.’ The second, with an original ghayyin, is g-z-r, meaning ‘be strong.’ The second root, g-z-r, is attested in Ugaritic . . . . On the basis of this evidence, Freedman suggests that the Hebrew expression ezer kenegdow be translated as ‘a power equal to him.’ Drawing on the philological insights of Freedman and Fox, translators may render the expression ezer kenegdow [‘an helpmeet’] as a ‘powerful counterpart.’ Not only is this linguistically possible, but it is appropriate in context.” Later, Zevit provides another, alternative etymological understanding. Zevit, *What Really Happened*, 135–6: “In the Hebrew text of both verses where it appears, Genesis 2:18, 20, a disjunctive accent mark called a tīphāh . . . is found under the first word, separating it from the second one . . . . The disjunctive tīphāh instructs readers to pause after the marked word, as if after an English comma, so that a sliver of silence separates it from the following word: ezer [helper] + disjunctive accent + ke [like] + neged + ow [his] . . . . Accordingly, verse 18b may be translated: ‘I will make for him a helper, like his neged.’ This only leaves neged in need of clarification. . . . Ancient Ethiopic, Ge’ez, a language distantly related to Hebrew, provides an etymological cognate that fits the semantic bill: nagad, a word meaning ‘tribe, clan, kin.’ The Ge’ez word is also cognate to Hebrew neked, whose meaning as determined by context is ‘progeny’ or ‘descendent’ (Gen. 21:23; Isa. 14:22; Job 18:19). I propose that in its two occurrences in the Garden story, neged is
This incompleteness is resolved with the formation of the woman: “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: and she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:21–23).

This event parallels the naming of the animals in that God brings her before Adam and Adam recognizes his relationship to her by giving her an ontological title that denotes both the sameness and difference of Adam to Eve. Yet the ritualized nature of this event suggests that the event is more than a mere presentation, especially when coupled with Adam’s words that the woman is “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,” which reflects a covenantal usage elsewhere in the Old Testament.  

---

31. Walton, *Lost World*, 80: Pertaining to the word for Adam’s sleep: “This sleep blocks all perception in the human realm. In each [usage of the term] there is either danger in the human realm of which the sleeper is unaware, or there is insight in the visionary realm to be gained. Pertaining to the latter possibility, it is of interest that the Septuagint translators chose to use the Greek word *ekstasis* in Genesis 2:21. This word is the same as the one they used in Genesis 15:12, suggesting an understanding related to visions, trances and ecstasy (cf. the use of this Greek word in Acts 10:10; 11:5; 22:17). . . . From these data it is easy to conclude that Adam’s sleep has prepared him for a visionary experience rather than for a surgical procedure. . . . The vision would concern her identity as ontologically related to man.”

32. While this is possible, it is possible that the mention of the rib was meant as a wordplay. As noted earlier, one of the terms to describe the creation of Adam and Eve in the priestly version was image, or *šelem*. The Hebrew word for rib here is ʾšēlāʿ rather than the more common term for bone, ʾešem. ʾšēlāʿ is found elsewhere referring to boards or planks that are used as supports in a number of edifices including the tabernacle, thus it is possible that the usage of the term
29:14, Jacob is accepted by Laban, his future father-in-law, by the declaration “Surely thou art my bone and my flesh.” While this may reflect the actual genetic relationship between Jacob and Laban, who is his uncle on his mother’s side, it also foreshadows the family relationship that will exist between Jacob and Laban following Jacob’s marriages to Laban’s daughters.

Similarly, in Judges 9:1–2, Abimelech seeks to establish legitimacy among the inhabitants of Shechem, who were related to him through his maternal uncle, by stating, “I am your bone and your flesh.” In 2 Samuel 5:1, the acceptance of David’s regency by the tribes of Israel at Hebron is noted by their declaration, “Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.” Following Absalom’s rebellion, David uses the same terminology to remind the tribal elders and Amasa of his legitimate claim to the throne (2 Samuel 19:12–13). In all these cases, whether the individuals are directly related or not, the terminology is used to either establish or maintain a legitimately recognized relationship that demonstrated acceptance of the individual within the community. In the case of the last two, the terminology suggests a covenant between David and the rest of Israel with their recognition of him as family. And if this is in fact what the terminology implies, then Adam’s declaration is one which recognizes the covenantal relationship between himself and the woman, a relationship institutionalized in marriage.

Whether the modern reader reads the account as one indicating marriage, it is clear that the ancient redactor(s) viewed this event as one that instituted marriage: “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). The mention of the couple as “one flesh” reflects the covenantal usage of “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” declared by Adam and reflects the social meaning as noted elsewhere in the Old Testament in which these

is a pun reflecting the woman as foundational support to Adam as well as his image. A rare usage of the term is that of essence, presumably the bone represents the essence or foundation of the body and thus may stand as representative of the essence of the individual. In light of this, it is possible that the use of ṣēlā’ here carries multivalent meaning, which may include the essence nuance, thus rendering a reading in which Adam’s very essence is unfinished without Eve.
refer to the concept of “family.”

Here, the individual is to leave a family of “one flesh” (the primary unit of mother-father-child) to become another family of “one flesh” (husband-wife and potential mother-father). The verb “cleave” is also suggestive of the marriage covenant as it is found elsewhere in a covenental sense to describe the relationship one is to have with God (Deuteronomy 10:20; Joshua 22:5).

For Latter-day Saints, this designation takes on even greater meaning because Zion is also characterized by its oneness of “flesh,” or one heart and one mind, thus suggesting that not only is the social institution of

33. It is possible that it also highlights the action taken above. Just as the rib was removed from Adam’s side, so Adam removes himself from the side of his parents. Now she is his k’negdô, “his power/his helper/his kin,” not his parents.

34. Another interpretation is as follows, Zevit, What Really Happened, 156–57: “verbs from the root ‘-z-b [‘leave’] are attested 216 times in the Hebrew Bible. In three passages where a meaning such as ‘leave’ or ‘abandon’ is inappropriate they are translated differently . . . not until the twentieth century did scholars posit the existence of another root, identified as ‘-z-b II, and recognize that it has cognate verbs in Ugaritic, Epigraphic South Arabian, and Géez. On the basis of these cognates, the posited means of the newly discovered Hebrew root are “to help, fix, make whole, set right.” . . . The verse now supports the following translation: “Therefore a man strengthens/supports/helps his father and his mother and clings to his woman/wife and they become one flesh.” . . . In this context . . . ‘therefore’ makes a conclusion that humans behave differently from animals that do not care or even recognize their mother and father after they mature, that mate (more or less) indiscriminately and casually, and that are unaware of their own offspring after they mature. The verse implies that since parents birth sons and (may) provide those sons with wives, every son is obliged to care for his father and his mother and to cling to his wife simultaneously. Understood this way, the verse also alludes to the formation of extended families embracing three generations in a single household that were typical of Israelite society.”

35. Mettinger, The Eden Narrative, 72: “Validation of social values may also be involved in the motif of the woman as created from the rib of the man. Though 2:23–24, in which a man must leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, hardly reflects established marriage customs in Israel, one should not disregard the possibility that these verses with the formula “bones of my bones and flesh of my flesh” may nevertheless validate marriage as a fundamental social institution.” See W. Reiser, “Die Verwandtschaftsformel in Gen 2:23,” in Theologische Zeitschrift 16 (1960); 1–4, see also Genesis 29:14; Judges 9:2–3; 2 Samuel 5:1; 19:13–14.
marriage created in the garden, but the highest form of social communion, a Zion society, was also present via the institution of marriage. Thus, the institution of marriage and the recognition by both Adam and Eve as to its importance for their own identity is a major event in the continuing process of making the cosmos.\textsuperscript{36} And yet it is not the completion of the cosmos. That required a fall.

\textbf{WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THE FRUIT WAS GOOD: THE FALL AS A COSMOS-MAKING EVENT}

The first indication following the Creation and the marriage of Adam and Eve that the cosmos is still incomplete is the observation that “they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:25). Though it might seem that this phrase simply points out that Adam and Eve are unaware that they lack clothing, nakedness is more than a synonym for nudity; it is often associated with the social experiences of shame and humiliation.\textsuperscript{37} In fact, this is the only place in the scriptures where nakedness does not bring about negative social consequences. Yet the negative experiences associated with nakedness are in fact constructive to the functioning of society as they provide a clear delineation

\textsuperscript{36} Walton, Lost World, 80–81: “Genesis 2:24 is responding to the question of why a person would leave the closest biological relationship (parents to children) in order to forge a relationship with a biological outsider. The answer offered is that marriage goes beyond biology to recover an original state, for humanity is ontologically gendered. Ontology trumps biology. This has shown Adam that the woman is not just a reproductive mating partner. Her identity is that she is his ally, his other half. We can now see that Genesis 2:24 makes more of a statement than we had envisioned. Becoming one flesh is not just a reference to the sexual act. The sexual act may be the one that rejoins them, but it is the rejoining that is the focus. When Man and Woman become one flesh, they are returning to their original state.”

\textsuperscript{37} See Isaiah 20:2–4; 58:7; Ezekiel 18:7, 16; Amos 2:16; Job 1:21; 22:6; 24:7, 10; Ecclesiastes 5:14; Alma 18:14–22.
between what is proper and what is not, particularly in the dynamics between male and female.38

Adam’s and Eve’s unawareness of their state, therefore, is striking and suggests that further cosmic differentiation is necessary. This differentiation would entail the moral principles by which a society could be sustained such as right/wrong, obedience/disobedience, innocence/guilt, correct/incorrect, and so forth. Each of these polarities are at the foundation of a socio-legal tradition and are essential to a functioning society as they provide meaning, structure, and limitations by which identity and purpose can be established. Thus, Adam and Eve’s lack of awareness concerning their nakedness may serve as the indicator that these binaries have not been enacted and that therefore the cosmos is not yet fully complete.

The Book of Mormon—Lehi’s discourse in 2 Nephi 2 in particular—highlights the negative aspects of this undifferentiation: “Behold, 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, . . . having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin” (2 Nephi 2:22–23). This last clause is particularly indicting as the pronouncements or recognitions of the creation as “good” demonstrates the divine awareness that they are functioning correctly. That Adam and Eve were unable to do good while in the garden, arising from their lack of awareness concerning the polarities of good/bad, joy/misery, and so forth, suggests that remaining in such a state would be “not good,” or incomplete, similar to the state of Adam alone in the garden. This would necessitate their leaving the garden to fulfill their purpose. Thus, while it is true that leaving the garden would result in death, life and death now became a

38. Zevit, What Really Happened, 172–73: “Although their rush to make loincloths is sometimes presented as a demonstration of their guilt, it is actually about the rush of knowledge that follows a blush of shame. Shame is tied to understanding cultural values and to changeable individual behavior; guilt is tied to juridic, forensic contexts and can sometimes be expiated. For individuals to experience shame, they must know social codes and must be aware they committed or were subjected to an impropriety related to a particular value or norm. They also must know what is required to rectify the situation.”
differentiation both cognitively and experientially that was necessary for Adam and Eve to do good and continue toward the ultimate creation of exaltation. 39

At this point in the narrative, the reader is introduced to the serpent, which is the antagonist to the conflict in which the differentiations mentioned will be experienced. Because this figure is never explicitly identified in either the Old or New Testaments, modern scholarship has treated the serpent as a trickster, a character often found in folklore who is morally and ethically ambiguous but is instrumental in the acquisition or innovation of social goods. Yet by the intertestamental period, it appears that a number of extrabiblical texts had begun to associate the serpent with Satan, an individual of premortal, divine origin who had rebelled from God and was thrust down to earth. As early as the mid-second century, Christians have assumed the same. 40

Like other Christians, Latter-day Saints also understand the figure to be Satan, but this understanding emerges from more than common Christian interpretation; it includes material concerning the Creation and the Garden of Eden from latter-day scripture as well. Moses 4, in particular, interrupts the narrative of the garden to include a brief excursus

39. Mettinger, The Eden Narrative, 4: “An interpretation that increasingly attracts attention is the Eden Narrative as a story about human maturation. In her semiotic analysis, Ellen van Wolde argues that this is in fact the central thematic aspect of the story. She sees Gen. 2:24 (the man leaving his father and mother) as presenting ‘man’s process of development in a nutshell’ [Ellen van Wolde, A Semiotic Analysis of Genesis 2–3, SSN 25 (Assen, Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1989), 217]. Van Wolde takes the four narrative episodes as referring the subsequent stages of ‘before birth’ (2:4b–6), ‘childhood’ (2:7–25), ‘adolescence’ (3:1–7), and ‘maturity’ (3:8–24). The tree is the knowledge of good and evil. The same type of knowledge is mentioned in connection with children in Deut. 1:39, ‘your children, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil’ (RSV).”

40. Elaine A. Phillip, “Serpent Intertexts: Tantalizing Twists in the Tales,” in Bulletin for Biblical Research 10, no. 2 (2000): 233–345. “By the first centuries BCE and CE, the serpent had become linked with the malevolent figure of Satan, the devil, the great dragon. This connection is most comprehensively articulated for the Christian community in Rev 12:9 and 20:1, but some aspects of the identification are evident in extracanonical texts as well. See Apoc. Mos. 15–21; Life of Adam and Eve 12–16; 2 Enoch 31:3–6; Wis 2:23–24; Apoc. Abr: 23., 238.”
concerning Satan’s rebellion in the premortal realm. While the excursus outlines Satan’s attempt to become the Redeemer, it also highlights the reasons as to why he wanted to become such: “Wherefore, because that Satan rebelled against me, and sought to destroy the agency of man, which I, the Lord God, had given him, and also, that I should give unto him mine own power . . . I caused that he should be cast down; and he became Satan, yea, even the devil” (Moses 4:3–4).

Though the text is relatively straightforward, there is ambiguity, particularly regarding the referent to the pronoun “him” in the two instances. While the common reading assumes that the first pronoun refers to man (thus Satan sought to destroy the agency given by God to all humankind), with the second referring to the adversary (thus suggesting that Satan’s reception of God’s power at this point could only happen through the destruction of humankind’s agency), it is possible the two pronouns refer either to humankind or Satan in both instances. If the second of these other options reflects the reading, it appears to highlight the nature of agency, as Satan, who seeks to destroy the agency of others, possesses his own. The other alternative reading suggests that the adversary struggles with man possessing both agency and God’s own power.\(^\text{41}\) Regardless, if

---

\(^{41}\) Intriguingly, while Satan’s refusal to accept Adam’s selection over himself is not found within the Latter-day Saint scriptural canon, it is a narrative found in a number of extrabiblical texts, perhaps reflecting later changes made in the scriptural texts, as we’ve noted earlier elsewhere. See B. Surah 7:11–18, *Life of Adam and Eve*, Slavonic III Baruch, *The Revolt of Satan, and the Battle in Heaven*, *Cave of Treasures*, St. Ephrem, *De Ecclesia* 47, *Discourse of Abaddon*. In these texts, Satan, who is leader of the divine host, is asked to give obeisance to Michael, who had been chosen to have preeminence and authority over the host. Satan refuses to do so and thus rebels. Though not found explicitly anywhere in the scriptures, this narrative may be alluded to in Hebrews 1:6, as part of Paul’s scriptural references to Christ’s preeminence: “And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him.” This follows Paul’s use of two Old Testament references, neither of which, in its original context, is about Christ specifically (Psalm 2, which can be messianic, but refers to the Davidic covenant specifically, and 2 Samuel 7:14, which again is the covenant established with David) and reflects the common rhetorical practice of using material out of its original context to make a new point. In these cases, though the verses are about David and the covenant established with him, they are used by Paul to describe Christ’s election. Verse
the verse reflects the second reading, again we find God accentuating the ontological relationship between humankind and the divine, as they too will have agency and divine power.

Following the excursus, the reader is back in familiar biblical territory as we are told that the serpent is “more subtle” or clever than any other animal (Moses 4:5). But this is then followed by another crucial addition: “And Satan put it into the heart of the serpent . . . and he sought also to beguile Eve, for he knew not the mind of God, wherefore he sought to destroy the world” (Moses 4:6). With this addition, the trickster nature of the serpent figure is gone and the beguiling of Eve is given a teleological dimension as it reflects the apparent antipathy of the adversary for the progression of humankind, as noted in the earlier excursus. Yet it also suggests that the act will not, in fact, have the devastating consequences Satan believes will result as the beguiling of Eve will not lead to the destruction of the world.

This lack of understanding strengthens a pun long recognized in the Garden of Eden narrative. The Hebrew terms for “naked” and “subtle,” terms describing the states of Adam and Eve, and the serpent, respectively, are `arûmmîm (naked, plural) and `ārûm (subtle). The narrative irony is that while Adam and Eve are physically naked and unaware, they will not remain in this state because they become aware and will progress and experience the cognitive differentiation necessary for the ongoing cosmic process. Satan, on the other hand, who knows not the mind of God, will never progress beyond his current state, unaware that he is, in fact, naked before God.

What exactly Satan does not know regarding the mind of God is not made explicit. But because this insight is associated with the beguiling of Eve, it suggests the adversary believes that the casting of Adam and Eve out of the garden will go contrary to the will of God. The beguiling scene begins with the serpent’s query: “Hath God said—Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Moses 4:7). The intent of the question is to get Eve to partake of the fruit; that required her perceiving the fruit differently

---

6 appears to also be a quote from another text, but nowhere is this text to be found. In light of its language, it is possible that we have here a known biblical text speaking of the second type of fall narrative.
than she had before. Her response is a repetition of the original injunction, which suggests that she has in fact never really considered the differences between the trees. The serpent retorts by saying that death will not be the result, instead the partaker will be like the gods, recognizing the difference between good and evil, a state referred to as “eyes . . . opened,” thus implying the ability to see or discern truly (Moses 4:8–13).

The result of the dialogue is a paradigm shift in which Eve now sees the tree and its fruit in a completely different light, one in which the tree is aesthetically attractive and, more importantly, good. As noted earlier, the declaration of a thing or state as good indicates that it is functioning properly and has been associated solely as a divine responsibility. With her recognition that the tree is good, Eve, like Adam before, demonstrates her divine nature, even her specific responsibility in the creation process. In this case, that which makes the fruit good is the potential it has to make one wise. The Hebrew verb sākal translated as “to make wise,” perhaps may more accurately be translated as “to understand or to have insight,” even “to act prudently.” Thus, eating the fruit may be understood as revelatory as it is the mechanism by which Eve may now understand or comprehend the polarities mentioned above and in so doing actually do good, or fully function to her purpose, as Lehi explained.

With these newly acquired insights, it appears that according to the narrative, Eve ate the fruit, gave some to Adam, who, as her husband, also ate the fruit, presumably in response to the same insights that Eve had. With both sets of eyes now open, the primal couple now realized their nakedness and organized their first creation together—clothing. Elsewhere in the ancient Near East, the acquisition of clothing highlights the boundary between the wild/undifferentiated and civilization/cosmos. As

42. Zevit, What Really Happened, 170: “The conversation with the snake is often labeled ‘the Temptation of Eve’ or ‘The Seduction of Eve.’ Such loaded terms are inappropriate, since most of what took place occurred within Hawwa’s [Eve’s] head as she processed cognitive information.”

43. Bernard F. Batto, Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 55–57: “In Mesopotamia the ancient bards had long since used the nakedness of the first humans to symbolize that these primitives, without benefit of the divinely bestowed gifts of civilization, were little better than animals. . . . In Mesopotamian tradition the
for the clothing itself, though some have suggested symbolic significance in the fig leaves, it is most likely that the narrative employs these leaves for a more prosaic reason—its maximum coverage. Functionally, the new clothing acts as camouflage as the reader is told that the newly dressed Adam and Eve hid themselves among the flora of the Garden from the presence of God.44

While the camouflage does not ultimately work, as Adam and Eve both respond to the inquiries of God, it does highlight the social separation that Adam and Eve now recognize as present between themselves and the divine.45 Whereas before there appears to have been no social distinction between God and the couple, now the couple deliberately separate themselves from the divine, feeling shame and believing that they are no longer worthy to be in his presence. The ensuing dialogue between God and the couple confirms their guilt as they both admit to eating the fruit. In both instances, the two individuals take responsibility for their own agency, noting that whatever the circumstances were at the moment of decision, the decision made was theirs alone. As with the production of the clothing, the acceptance of responsibility for one's choices highlights the increasing cosmic social order as this too is necessary for a competent society. Yet, while Adam and Eve are now socially aware and responsible, the consequences outlined by God earlier must still be met.

humans’ donning of clothes was accomplished with the good graces of the gods. Clothes were one of the gifts of civilization, along with knowledge of irrigation, agriculture, and the building of cities, which the gods bestowed upon human-kind for their advancement. . . . Whereas it was the nature of animals to go without clothes, gods wore clothing. . . . Accordingly, clothes were an effective metaphor of the dignity of humanity, beings closer in nature to the gods than to the animals.”


45. While the significance of this act is not explained in the Creation narrative, clothing generally, whether in an ancient context or a modern one, has a primary function of defining an individual within the larger social setting. Clothing often denoted one's social status (married, class affiliation, trade, and so forth) and the acts of investiture or divestiture indicated one's movement from one social level to another.
However, expulsion and death aren’t the only consequences given; two specific ones are given to Eve: the difficulty and pain associated with bearing and delivering children, and the establishment of Adam as the hierarchical head of the relationship. While the latter of the two may sound inappropriate today, this describes the most common power dynamic in marriage arrangements of ancient Israel. It may also reflect the tradition in which the woman leaves her family to follow after her husband, as the word for desire *tešûqâh* is derived from *šûq*, which carries the nuance of “follow” or “run after.” In at least one verb form, it carries with it the sense of “abundance” and “overflowing,” suggesting that her fortunes are now tied to those of her husband. Yet this dependence is not necessarily one-sided and may be viewed as complementary with the earlier editorial comment that the husband was to leave his family to cleave to his wife, a recognition that the wife was much more than property but, in fact, kin and to be treated as such.

As for the first consequence, the experience of sorrow via childbearing and -rearing, it reflects a similar consequence given to Adam. In his case, sorrow would be experienced through his efforts to bring forth produce from the earth itself. The Hebrew nominative form, translated as “sorrow,” is rare and does not necessarily carry the emotional nuance that the English term “sorrow” does (though the verbal form does). Instead, it is found within the context of the difficulty in the production of a thing; thus, its use in terms of childbirth refers to the difficulty and pain associated with the process of childbirth or childrearing and its usage regarding Adam’s sorrow with the difficulty of agricultural work.

For many, the promise of sorrow is a negative experience, and indeed the term is often used to denote the suffering and adversity that afflict Israel, and by extension, all humankind that followed the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Yet throughout the scriptures the experience of grief has manifold functions, a consequence of wrongdoing being only one. Though grief is not mentioned by name, the law of Moses emphasized again and again the expectation that Israel have empathy for the marginalized and less fortunate. Such empathy was to arise out of Israel’s recognition that they too had once been in similar straits. In the writings of Isaiah, the servant, explicitly identified as Israel elsewhere, is described as one
who, having experienced grief and sorrow, bears grief and carries sorrow (see Isaiah 53:3–5). Perhaps reflecting their common Israelite background, the faithful of Alma are told that if they desire to enter “into the fold of God,” they must demonstrate a willingness to bear one another’s burdens and “mourn with those who mourn” (Mosiah 18:8–9), characteristics that Jesus Christ would later encapsulate in his Beatitudes, including the declaration “blessed are they that mourn” (Matthew 5:4).

Perhaps the most significant, from a Latter-day Saint view, is Alma’s teaching that grief was an essential component of Christ’s ability to succor humankind. According to the prophet, Christ suffered all pain, including sorrow and grief, so that he could succor all in redemption. This sentiment was reflected in the Christian text of Hebrews in which the writer noted that those who were given the priesthood had the responsibility to “show compassion upon the ignorant and those that are out of the way; for he himself also is compassed about with infirmity,” suggesting that at least one later tradition understood that sorrow was a primary component of priestly duties (see Hebrews 5:1-2). In each of these instances, sorrow appears to provide for differentiation of experience, becoming a foundational element of memory by which individuals, through empathy, could participate in a cooperative community. In this manner, the promise of sorrow may be recognized as a cosmos-making act as much as the dividing of the waters, the naming of the animals, and the institution of marriage.

Two last events conclude the narrative. The first of these is Adam’s naming of the woman as Eve. The placement of this event seems odd and much later in the narrative then one would assume, yet it works within the context. Like other naming events, the naming of Eve has to do with identity and relationship, but unlike the earlier events, which emphasize the type of the object, in this case it is her actual name that is given, which suggests that it is meant to recognize Eve as an individualized being, separate and distinct from Adam, who could act independently and as significantly as Adam himself.

The name itself is ḥəvvāh, or “life,” and reflects Eve’s crucial and fundamental role in the presence, maintenance, and expression of life. Adam’s further identification of her as the “mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20)
highlights both her sociological and cosmological responsibilities. As such, she not only is necessary for the continuation of humankind and society but also, as the one who noted the fruit was good and partook of it first, created the conditions by which all life had the opportunity to progress. Again, this is expressed best in the Book of Mormon, where the reader is informed that without a fall, “all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created” (2 Nephi 2:22). In this decision, Eve complemented the role of God as creator, and the designation of mother reflects the larger, cosmological scope as well as the more particular, physical aspects of motherhood. Indeed, one could make the case that the designation demonstrates an ecclesiastical, even priestly, dimension to motherhood generally, and Eve specifically.

Yet the narrative is not merely an etiology to the name of Eve, it also highlights the importance of Adam’s recognition of its meaning. This

---

46. Ziony Zevit has suggested that the root stems instead from an Arabic cognate meaning “kin.” See What Really Happened, 229: “The word ḥay in this expression is cognate to Arabic noun hayya, meaning ‘kin, related members of a clan, descendants of a father or ancestor.’ . . . The proposed etymology clarifies not only the explanation provided for the name but also the name itself. Hawwa’s name, ḥawwāh, is derived from h-w-y also cognate to h-y-y and refers to related people. Its translation should reflect that fact, and verse 20a, paraphrased expansively, reads: ‘And he called her Hawwa, that is, Kin-maker, because she was the mother of all kinfolk.’”

47. Walton, Lost World, 112–13: “In Genesis 2 the woman is seen as the ally to man in service in sacred space. As an ally, she would not have to have the same roles as man, but little more can be said given the lack of information provided in the text. . . . Returning to the priestly roles of Adam and Eve, we will gain more insight if we look to the larger paradigm offered by the identification of Israel as a ‘kingdom of priests.’ Israel’s priestly role is found neither in the offering of rituals on behalf of the rest of the nations nor in servicing sacred space for them. Their role is to mediate knowledge of God, and their end goal is ultimately not to restrict access to the presence of God but to mediate access through instruction. The role of Adam and Eve in the garden, I would propose, has less to do with how the priests operated within Israel and more to do with Israel’s role as priests to the world. In such a view, we need not be concerned about a lack of women priests in Israel.”
reflects another important differentiation, this time of Adam and Eve as separate, unique individuals who may act according to their own will. Like the naming of the animals revealed to Adam what was lacking in the nascent cosmos—namely, a partner—so it is now that Adam acknowledges that the partner is something other than himself but complementary, that possesses her own ideas and approaches which are also creative, cosmic, and divine in scope. Whereas before Eve was “woman” and “helpmeet,” now she is an actualized individual named Eve. Though subtler than other differentiations, this one is just as important in the creation of the social cosmos as society is made up of individuals bound together, yet it could not have occurred until Eve had exercised her own agency, thus its placement so late in the narrative.

The final event before their expulsion is the investiture of Adam and Eve in clothing made by God. The investiture of Adam and Eve with clothing that God himself made is highly significant when viewed through the earlier lens concerning the social function of clothing. If the earlier construction and wearing of clothing represented Adam and Eve’s definition of self and a recognition of the perceived changes in social status, it suggested that these definitions and recognitions were their own, independent of God’s consideration. In other words, while the clothing has functioned properly, the definitions themselves are faulty because Adam and Eve made the clothing under the assumption that God is disappointed, angry, vengeful, and so forth. These are faulty assumptions and may reflect some of the deception of the adversary, who, by suggesting that God was hiding truth from Adam and Eve, had set up an antagonistic relationship between the couple and God. Thus their clothing reflects their belief, not necessarily God’s perspective. God’s investiture resets the relationship. Yes, they are to experience the consequences of eating the fruit, but the antagonistic relationship they assumed was in place, because of the adversary’s words, was not correct. Importantly, the clothing represented God’s definition as to where they stood in his esteem while his actual investing them in the clothing suggested that they were indeed worthy to be a part of the divine community, even if they were to be physically separated for a time.48

The act itself is also reminiscent of other divine investitures, namely of the priests, as well as the righteous at judgment, and reflects the eschatological nature of the creation.\textsuperscript{49} As for the new identity specifically, while no new designation is given, it is telling that it is only after the second investiture that God now declared that “man is now become as one of us.”

Thus, Adam and Eve have now become like the Gods and can now create cosmos. Their expulsion is not so much a punishment, but the opportunity to put the creative cosmos-making skills, inherent as the same type of being as God and given to them in their interaction with the same, to use. That the book of Genesis ends with the creation of Israel suggests that to the writers or redactors, the creation process was understood as continuing still through the presence of Israel as God’s chosen people. Like their forebears, who themselves reflected priestly, even divine, responsibilities, Israel was chosen to bless all nations of the earth, becoming a kingdom of priests themselves.

Yet, for all of the significant insights into the very nature and relationship of God and man, and their apparent reflection in the later purposes of Israel, it is not until the New Testament that the Creation narratives of Genesis 1–3 are explicitly alluded to in the biblical text. But the reconciliation with God. While Adam wore his own fig-leaves apron, he was afraid of God, but when he was clothed in a garment of skin provided by God, he did not panic before him. In short, the clothing image in Gen. 3:21 signifies that Adam’s restoration to his original life and glory, to peace with God, and to kingship over the other creatures has started. It is possible that the clothing also reflected another important aspect of the creation narrative, the necessity of the Atonement. While the Fall was necessary for exaltation, Adam and Eve needed to learn that this was not going to be possible on their own, thus the investitures and divestitures present in the narrative become the mechanism by which this knowledge is gained.

\textsuperscript{49} See 2 Nephi 9:14; Doctrine and Covenants 29:13. Though he references Genesis 1 specifically, Anderson also notes the eschatological nature of the creation narratives: “It is significant that the Priestly creation story is articulated in the time sequence of a week. The week is governed not by an abstract principle of Time but by the will of God, which gives each day its meaningful content. In Israel’s faith time does not move in a circle; it moves toward the culmination of the Creator’s intention, just as the week of creation moves toward the Sabbath rest. Thus the creation faith is eschatological. The affirmation “in the beginning” is incomplete without the related affirmation “in the end.” From Creation, 16.
prominence of these narratives in the Book of Mormon suggests that the narratives continued to have meaning to ancient Israel. We have already seen the value of 2 Nephi 2 in understanding the incomplete nature of the Garden of Eden. In fact, the entire chapter appears to be structured on the principle of differentiation, demonstrating its vital function in the fulfilling of universal salvation.

Noting that there must be opposition in all things, Lehi points out that such a state provides for the presence of choice, a factor that is necessary to “bring about [God’s] eternal purposes in the end of man” (2 Nephi 2:15). Lack of agency, or the ability to act on or create differentiation, keeps an object or entity as “one body, . . . having no life neither death, nor corruption nor incorruption, happiness nor misery, neither sense nor sensibility. Wherefore it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation” (verses 11–12). It is this state of nonexperience that Lehi later intimates was the Garden of Eden: “And now . . . if Adam had not transgressed, . . . 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 . . . they would have remained in a state of innocence . . . doing no good, for they knew no sin” (verses 22–23). Thus the Fall of Adam and Eve, in which the primordial couple chose so that humankind “might have joy” (verse 25), or the ability to differentiate or act on differentiation, becomes fundamental to the continuing progression and salvation of all. That differentiation continues to play this role throughout an individual’s existence is noted by Lehi as he tied the creative principle of differentiation to one’s eschatological state: Humankind has “become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves. . . . And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life . . . or to choose captivity and death” (verses 26–27).

50. Five hundred years later, Alma uses the garden narrative to highlight the fundamental nature of the law of justice and its relationship to the law of mercy. In two instances, once before the people of Ammonihah and once in a personal conversation with his son Corianton, Alma follows the perspective of God and his agency, noting that if God had let Adam and Eve experience the negative consequences of death and expulsion following their disobedience, then “the plan of redemption would have been frustrated, and the word of God would
Besides the application of the Creation principles to existences at every stage, the Creation narratives appear to have been used as models for Book of Mormon experiences. For instance, the account of Lehi’s seminal dream in 1 Nephi 8 may best be understood as a Creation narrative similar to the ones found in Genesis 1–3. Like the undifferentiated precosmos, Lehi begins his dream in a “dark and dreary” waste, until the appearance of a being dressed in a white robe who provides a contrast to the dark and dreary state. His appearance gives Lehi a meaningful direction and a choice to either follow or remain in the state now defined in opposition to the being. Choosing to follow, Lehi eventually encounters a field characterized by a tree whose fruit was so white it exceeded “all the whiteness that [he] had ever seen” (1 Nephi 8:11), of which he partakes. Though he is not expelled from the environment of the tree for doing so, he does take on the role of the guide by leading others to the tree, a role that is intimated to only be possible after eating the fruit.

Nephi, Lehi’s son, will later see this highly symbolic narrative through a very historical lens by which the future of his people is viewed through the prism of Lehi’s creation narrative. Indeed, the culminating event of the Book of Mormon, the appearance and ministry of Christ to Lehi’s and Nephi’s descendants approximately six hundred years later, may be profitably be read as the physical analogue of the dream and thus as another creation narrative. According to the text in 3 Nephi, with the death of Christ in the Old World, the New World experienced three days of physical upheaval that completely reconfigured the local geography and which included “a mist of darkness” that no light could penetrate (1 Nephi 12:4), characteristics that are similar to the precosmic state described in Genesis 1. That Christ came as a glorious, light-filled being to the temple in the land of Bountiful is almost expected when the event is viewed have been void,” (Alma 12:26) leading to a situation in which “God would cease to be God” (Alma 42:13).

through the Creation narrative; that he then empowers the present congregation who go out among the greater population reflects the expulsion and the true purpose of Adam and Eve.

CONCLUSION

For millennia, the creation narratives of Genesis 1–3 have informed communities on the principles of differentiation, reflecting humankind’s, and Israel’s in particular, responsibility to continue the process of cosmos construction.52 Thanks to these narratives, the reader could recognize that the work of Adam and Eve was no different from their own responsibility to be holy and establish holiness. This is no less true for the Latter-day Saints, who also recognize that the narratives highlight the ontological similarities that lie at the heart of our salvation. As such, the creative narratives hold a special place in Latter-day Saint religious experience, being the narrative to the temple endowment. There members experience these narratives as if they were actually present and through the process realize their own role in the continuation and further work necessary to the social cosmos with Zion and exaltation as the culmination of the Creation. Thus, the Creation narratives are much more than simple tales, but are rich, complex accounts that have as much meaning today as they did when first crafted thousands of years ago. And this meaning is what provides one of its more important lessons: that the Bible overall still has a message for us.

52. Jon D. Levenson, Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 119: “Genesis 1:1–2:3, the priestly cosmogony, presents creation as an event ordered toward the rest of God, with which it closes, a rest that signifies an act of redemption and social reform and an opportunity for human participation in the sublime quietude of the unopposed creator God.” Anderson, From Creation, 6–7: “The redemptive word, by which Israel was created as the people of God, is none other than the creative word, by which the heavens were made. The point bears reemphasis that in the Bible creation is not an independent doctrine but is inseparably related to the basic story of the people in which Yahweh is presented as the actor and redeemer. Salvation and creation belong together.”