



WE *are*
ADAM

——
THE PARTNERSHIP OF
ADAM AND EVE IN THE
GARDEN OF EDEN AND
WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

RAMONA SIDDOWAY

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Chapter 1

IN THE BEGINNING



You keep using that word. I don't think it means what you think it means.

—Inigo Montoya, *The Princess Bride* Eve's Beguilement

At the heart of any Judeo-Christian religion is a very specific garden. Nearly every human knows the central characters in that garden, whether or not that person believes they existed. Any child in Sunday School can repeat what transpired, why, and by whom. This origin story is tightly woven into our culture, affecting every relationship between males and females, as well as the roles they inherit.

To explore a woman's role in any type of priesthood capacity, we must first unpack some very deeply embedded cultural and Judeo-Christian misconceptions that go back to, what many consider, the beginning.

Throughout history, and still prevalent in some cultures today, is the stilted view of Eve's part in the Fall and her subsequent place in humanity. People have taken certain scriptures from Paul (see 1 Timothy 2:12–14 and 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35) to condemn Eve, building a false foundation for Eve and her daughters' supposed inferiority and subordination to man. Two such arguments made are that Eve is inferior because (1) the serpent

beguiled her and (2) she was made after Adam.

Let's first discuss the correct meaning of the word *beguile*.

The 1828 edition of Webster's Dictionary defines *beguile* as "to delude, to deceive, or to impose on by artifice or craft."¹ Webster's even quotes Genesis 3:13 as an example of the word. Eve's perceived mistake was definitely baked into the culture of the day. Because of this tradition, many believe that *beguile* simply means to be tricked or deceived.

Culture often creates subtle overlays in a group's dynamics. The specific doctrine on a topic may be entirely different than what is actually played out within a group. Culture also comes into play with certain translations. The translators of the King James Version of the Bible were all steeped in a philosophy of "original sin" beliefs and practices.

But Dr. Nehama Aschkenasy, a Hebrew scholar, writes that when accounting for her actions, Eve chose an uncommon Hebrew verb. He writes that *beguiled* "has retained an extraordinary flavor in Hebrew and is only used on rare and unusual occasions. Translations that opt for 'deceive' or 'trick' (instead of 'beguiled') lose the wealth and innovation of the woman's lexicon."²

Dr. Aschkenasy goes on to explain that Eve's choice to eat of the fruit was after (and through) intense, puzzling contemplation that involved Eve questioning and pondering her role—not only in the garden but also for eternity. Eve was not tricked into eating the fruit in the sense that she did so blindly. Eve began questioning the possible purpose of the tree—a gateway to greater intellectual capacity and a possible future that was closer to what the Father is living. By using this verb, Eve described the internal, mental process that took place before she ate the fruit.

A truer translation of *beguile* is much more complex and rich than the merely base, damning, and culturally tainted one of *tricked*. The latter creates a mental image of a weaker, less intelligent Eve in the minds of the readers, where, if the Hebrew lexicon of her language is studied, we find quite the opposite.

Another translation of Genesis 3:13 reads, "And the woman replied, 'The serpent caused me to feel responsible/guilty and I ate.'"³ What did she feel responsible for? Perhaps Eve felt responsible for the fact that they were

childless, that she was barren, and Satan insinuated that it was her fault.⁴ “Through her elegant wording,” wrote Dr. Aschkenasy, “the woman has lifted her disobedience to the level of a momentous event of great mental and existential significance.”⁵

MOTIVES

It’s not just what Satan *did* say when he communicated with Eve, but what he *didn’t* say that made his claims deceptive. He claimed she wouldn’t die. But she certainly would, and she would suffer much on the way to death. He also failed to mention the part about the big chunk of work ahead of her, leaving out everything that came in between eating the fruit and becoming like God.

Isn’t that how he tempts any of us? He never provides us with—and didn’t with Eve—the full story. He uses what we desire most as bait, promises a shortcut, and then distracts us from the unpleasant consequences.⁶

This situation, and all others that involve Satan, can be more clearly put into context when we consider the source and examine his motives. As we try to comprehend Eve’s character, we cannot ignore Satan’s.

Satan’s entire mission has been an attempt to dethrone Father in Heaven as our God. Satan wants to be worshiped.⁷ He wants the glory, the kudos, the followers, the throne. He wants the power without the responsibility. Just as there have been other worlds,⁸ other “Adams,”⁹ other “Eves,” there must have been a template plan that was devised for each. We do not know the history of other worlds; we only know the dealings of God with this world and our history.¹⁰ But Satan knew enough to believe that he had to get to the first parents and disrupt something of the plan. What was his motive? To be worshiped as he witnessed our Father in Heaven was worshiped.

The being who wants to be the god of this world suggested to Adam and Eve to put on flimsy, degradable leaves; not for protection but rather to cover—and ironically—highlight their shame, whereas our true God provides durable, long lasting animal skins,¹¹ garments of honor¹² and glory, a symbol of the full and protective covering of Christ’s Atonement.

CONTEXT IS KING

Let's look at another contextual example of *beguile* from the Book of Mormon. Ammon, after he rescued King Lamoni's sheep in a heroic show of bravery, now has the king's ear. Lamoni asks him a question, and Ammon responds: "Wilt thou hearken unto my words, if I tell thee by what power I do these things? And this is the thing that I desire of thee. And the king answered him, and said: Yea, I will believe all thy words. And thus he was *caught with guile*."¹³

No one would suggest that Ammon tried to trick or deceive Lamoni. But this verse and the dialogue between these two figures serves as an example as to the proper *flavoring* of the word *beguile*.¹⁴

But let us be clear: Ammon was harmless, whereas Satan certainly was and is not. The word is the same; the motives are entirely different.

SIN VERSUS TRANSGRESSION AND THE REAL CHOICE IN THE GARDEN THE GENESIS VERSION OF THE FALL RECORDS THAT THE COMMANDMENT NOT TO PARTAKE OF THE FRUIT OF THE TREE OF GOOD AND EVIL WAS GIVEN TO ADAM ALONE. ADAM CONSEQUENTLY TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF TO RELAY THAT COMMANDMENT TO EVE, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT CERTAIN THAT HE WAS INSTRUCTED BY ELOHIM TO DO SO. THE HEBREW IN THE GENESIS ACCOUNT HAS “THE COMMANDMENT [AS] DIRECTED TO A SECOND-PERSON MALE—’YOU, MAN.’”¹⁵ WITHIN THIS SPECIFIC NARRATIVE, IT APPEARS NOT AS A COMMANDMENT DIRECTED AT EVE, BUT ONLY ADAM. HOWEVER, AS LATTER-DAY SAINTS, WE DO HAVE OTHER RENDERINGS¹⁶ OF THIS STORY, ALLEGORICAL AS WELL IN NATURE. BUT AS WE READ THE ADDITIONAL PERSONAL ACCOUNTS OF ADAM AND EVE, WE SEE THAT BOTH OF THEM RECOGNIZE AND ADMIT THAT BY PARTAKING, THEY WERE *TRANSGRESSING* A COMMANDMENT.¹⁷

Explaining the distinction between a sin and a transgression, Elder Dallin H. Oaks wrote: This suggested contrast between a *sin* and a *transgression* reminds us of the careful wording in the second article of faith: “We believe that men will be punished for their own *sins*, and not for Adam’s *transgression*” (emphasis added). It also echoes a familiar distinction in the law. Some acts, like murder, are crimes because they are inherently wrong. Other acts, like operating without a license, are crimes only because they are legally prohibited. Under these distinctions, the act that produced the Fall was not a sin—inherently wrong—but a transgression—wrong because it was formally prohibited. These words are not always used to denote something different, but this distinction seems meaningful in the circumstances of the Fall.¹⁸

We can tell that Eve, by her comments made later, knew of what she did.

It is erroneous to think that a plan as grand as the Father's had to be inaugurated with and by craftiness and trickery. Both Adam and Eve knew of the two commandments: 1) to multiply and replenish the earth and 2) not to partake of the fruit.

God gave them a choice: remain forever as they were in the garden (do not eat the fruit), or replenish the earth with children (eat the fruit) and leave the garden. As the garden was in a state of timelessness, no children could be conceived or born, as both conception and birth are required to have a forward movement of time. As death was not possible, neither was a true meaning of life. And just as birth and death were not possible, any other opposites were equally impossible. By partaking of the fruit, Adam and Eve introduced opposites: birth and death, happiness and sorrow. In other words, life.

Both knew what they wanted and what needed to be done. Life in the garden for Eve was not bearable without children, and for Adam, the garden was not paradise without Eve.

ENDNOTES

1. Webster's Dictionary 1828, webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/Beguile, accessed October 8, 2019.
2. Aschkenasy Nehama, "Woman at the Window: Biblical Tales of Oppression and Escape." Essay. In *Woman at the Window: Biblical Tales of Oppression and Escape*, (S.l., MI: Wayne State University Press., 1998), 128.
3. Shira Halevi, "The Life Story of Adam and Havah: a New Targum of Genesis 1:26–5:5." In *The Life Story of Adam and Havah: a New Targum of Genesis 1:26–5:5* (Aronson, 1997), 202.
4. Isn't that the tactic he usually uses?
5. Aschkenasy, 128.
6. 1 Nephi 8:23–24
7. Moses 1:12–19
8. Moses 1:33, 7:30
9. Moses 1:34
10. Moses 1:35
11. Moses 4:27; Genesis 3:21. See also Halevi, 13–15.
12. Halevi, 15. What is also fascinating here is how words can be translated and defined in Hebrew. According to Halevi, some translators wrote that God clothed Adam and Eve in garments of light or glory; and that light is a metaphor for knowledge, revelation, or joy. These garments, whatever their material, were worn next to the skin.
13. Alma 18:22–23, emphasis added.
14. The word *guile* as used in this scripture is a noun suggesting cunning, artifice, craft, and is

most often used in a negative connotation. *Beguile* as used by Eve is a transitive verb of “be” and “guile” meaning to delude, impose, or deceive *by* craft or artifice. See webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/Guile and webstersdictionary1828.com/Dictionary/Beguile

15. Halevi, 174

16. Latter-day temples

17. 2 Nephi 2:22–25; Moses 5:10–11

18. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Great Plan of Happiness,” *Ensign*, November 1993.

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