



Mosiah 16.³⁻⁷— Meditation

³For they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil. ⁴Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state. ⁵But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore, he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God.

⁶And now if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption. ⁷And if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, there could have been no resurrection.

It has become fashionable in LDS theology and culture—seemingly supported by certain temple theatrical screenplays and performances—to portray Eve’s choice to partake of the fruit as an enlightened, well-thought out decision. One suspects that this is more a reflection of the culture’s attempt to deflect from its own increasingly recognized institutional misogyny than a trustworthy theological insight. It certainly seems at odds with the Book that the culture claims is the “most correct.” Today’s passage is but one data point reflective of that tension.

One can claim that “blaming” Eve was, itself, misogynistic in the first place. Very well. But, say that. Don’t create an unverifiable alternative explanation that does not possess one iota of scriptural justification.

Abinadi understands that “our first parents”—plural, man and woman—were “beguiled.” They were deceived, tricked. Their decision to eat the fruit was not enlightened, though their later reflections upon their experience were. They were duped into believing and acting upon something that was not so—a blatant Satanic lie.

They were enlightened enough, it is claimed, to know eating the fruit meant “man might be” and that it opened new avenues of choice. But what kind of “man” did their choice produce? On this, the Book of Mormon is consistent and unambiguous. The couple’s choice to eat the fruit brought into being creatures who would become subject to the Devil. This subjugation would bring about a race that is “carnal, sensual, and devilish.” It would bring about not one, but innumerable “lost” generations and billions of lost souls. Amulek, perhaps, put it as well as anyone ever has in his uncompromising indictment of humankind.

“For it is expedient that an atonement should be made; for according to the great plan of the Eternal God

there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, *all are hardened; yea, all are fallen and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement* which it is expedient should be made.”¹

The new fangled version of “women’s liberation” reflected in the new LDS view of Eve is not potent enough to erase the Church’s institutional misogyny. At the same time, it diminishes, at least for this carnal, sensual, and devilish man, the punch that Jesus’ atonement carries with it.

It is one thing for Jesus to redeem a few noble, enlightened souls who mildly, almost passively, “transgress.” It is a whole other story, and far more impressive and impressionable for him to redeem souls that have subjected themselves, by choice, to the Devil and have become lost in a carnal, sensual, and devilish life. It is the second of these two Redeemers with whom I am most experientially familiar. The first draws a big yawn and induces little awe and gratitude. The second makes me want to jump and shout, “Hallelujah.”

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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¹ Alma 34.⁹