

# Jesus Christ and the Everlasting Gospel

Jehovah and the Premortal Ministry

Jehovah Created the Earth





# Revelation 12 – War in Heaven

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1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels...

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

# The Baal Cycle

One is tempted to call the divine council of Ugarit a sort of “dysfunctional family”, since **the younger children of El are routinely depicted as rivalrous and vindictive over who will emerge pre-eminent in the divine council.** The sons of El who make their most dramatic mark in Canaanite religion are Baal the lightning and fertility god, Yamm the god of the sea, and Mot, the god of death and the underworld. Their vicissitudes are chronicled in the *Baal Epic*, a complex myth that is, in the words of Pardee, “the most important literary work preserved . . . by the West Semitic peoples in the second millennium BCE.” The Baal Epic can rightly be called an epic poem that can proudly take a place next to anything written by the greats such as Homer, Milton or Goethe. (Pardee, “The Ba’lu Myth,” 241.)



# The Baal Cycle

The Baal Epic begins with the gods sending envoys and messengers back and forth from one another, sending dire threats and stroking their egos in anticipation for the theomachy (CTA 1–CTA 2 i.11–19). “Give (up), O gods, the one whom you obey . . . Give (up) Ba’lu . . . that I might take possession of his gold,” orders Yamm at the beginning of the battle (CTA i.18–19). Baal is outraged at this threat, and responds with violence. “Then Prince Ba’lu is sick (with rage), [moreover he takes] in his hand a striking weapon, in his right hand a smiting weapon” (CTA 2 i.38). Thus begins the fight, with different gods taking sides and assisting in the fight. The craftsman god Kotaru fashions weapons (CTA 2 iv.11–27) while El approves of Yamm building a palace (CTA 2 iii.6–11) and Attartu extols Baal as a cosmic warrior (CTA 2 iv. 28–30).

Ultimately Baal is victorious in destroying Yamm (CTA 2 iv.32) and throws a lavish feast with spectacularly anthropomorphic depictions of the food, drink and entertainment of the gods (CTA 3.i).

*(CTA = Corpus des tablettes en cuneiformes en alphabetiques decouvertes a Ras Shamra – Ugarit de 1929 a 1939.)*

# The Baal Cycle

Baal's supremacy is later challenged by Mot. "I am the only one who rules over the gods, who fattens gods and men, who satiates the hordes of the earth," boasts Mot (CTA 4 vii.51). The pattern is repeated again, with Baal and Mot sending messengers back and forth before the battle commences.

This time, however, in a shocking twist **Mot is victorious** in dispatching an arrogant Baal, who had underestimated the unstoppable power of death, which Mot controls. The gods mourn and bury Baal (CTA 5 vi–CTA 6 i.32), with Anat, Baal's faithful wife, crying: "Ba'lu is dead, what (is to become of) the people, the Son of Dagan (is dead), what is to become of the hordes of the earth?" (CTA 6 i.4).

# The Baal Cycle

The myth concludes with the miraculous revival of Baal and the capitulation of Mot (CTA 6 iii.1–21; vi.10–30). Although death proved temporarily victorious, and will still prey upon mortals (CTA 6 v), in the end it is Baal who secures his dominion over the divine council and ultimately the cosmos through his control of the regenerative properties of rain and animal and plant reproduction.

# War in Heaven

“What kind of war [was the War in Heaven]? The same kind that prevails on earth; the only kind Satan and spirit beings can wage—a war of words, a tumult of opinions, a conflict of ideologies; a war between truth and error”

(Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1965–73], 3:518).





# D&C 138.55-56

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“God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory... saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself.”

(Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith [2007], 210).



# More intelligent than all of them

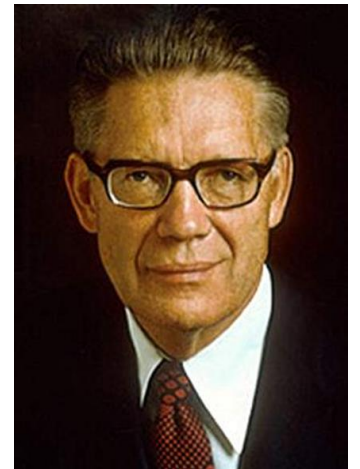
“In intelligence and performance, [Jesus Christ] far surpasses the individual and the composite capacities and achievements of all who have lived, live now, and will yet live! (See Abr. 3:19.)”

(Neal A. Maxwell, “O, Divine Redeemer,” Ensign, Nov. 1981, 8).



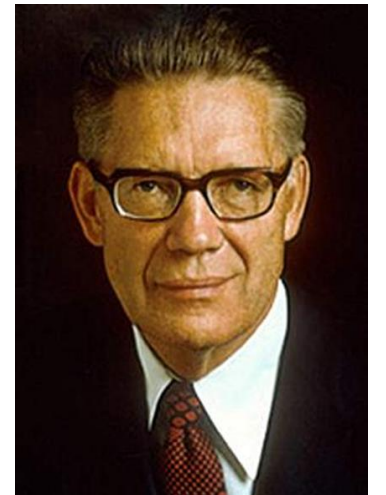
# Talents in the Pre-earth life

“Being subject to law, and having their agency, all the spirits of men, while yet in the Eternal Presence, developed aptitudes, talents, capacities, and abilities of every sort, kind, and degree. During the long expanse of life which then was, an infinite variety of talents and abilities came into being. ...



# Talents in the Pre-earth life

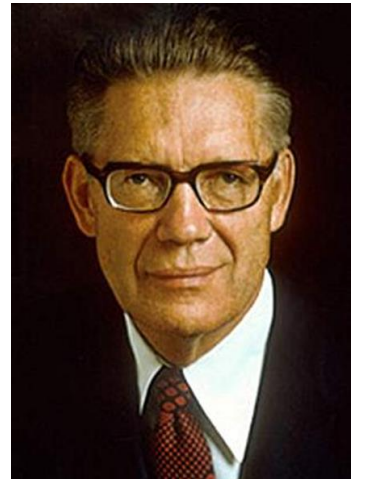
“The Lord endowed us all with agency; he gave us laws that would enable us to advance and progress and become like him; and he counseled and exhorted us to pursue the course leading to glory and exaltation. He himself was the embodiment and personification of all good things. Every desirable characteristic and trait dwelt in him in its eternal fulness.



# Talents in the Pre-earth life

All of his obedient children started to become like him in one way or another. There was as great a variety and degree of talent and ability among us there as there is among us here. Some excelled in one way, others in another. The Firstborn excelled all of us in all things”

(Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. [1979–81], 1:23).





# Christ and the Creation

D&C 38.1-3

Genesis 1.1-3

John 1.1-3

D&C 104.14-17

Moses 2.1





A composite image showing Earth, the Moon, and the Sun in space. Earth is on the left, showing green land and blue oceans. The Moon is in the center, and the Sun is on the right, glowing brightly. The background is a dark starry sky.

How?

# Science and Mormonism: Past, Present, Future

David H. Bailey

IN 1832, WHILE JOSEPH SMITH was organizing the Mormon church, Ralph Waldo Emerson wryly observed, "The Religion that is afraid of science dishonours God and commits suicide."<sup>1</sup> One hundred sixty-four years later, as the church faces a new century and a new millennium, issues in the arena of science and religion are still before us.

Will the church be able to retain the essence of its theology in the face of challenges from science? Will the church's discourse on scientific topics be marked by fundamentalism, isolationism, or progressivism? Will the church be able to retain its large contingent of professional scientists? Will it be able to produce new scientists in fields germane to this discussion? Will Mormon youth be able to sort out conflicts between faith and science? What will be the likely outcome of the faith *versus* science issues currently being discussed in LDS literature? What entirely new issues will emerge? What is the likelihood that the church will be able to deal with these new issues?

## A GLANCE AT THE PAST

Before answering these questions we first need to review briefly the history of scientific thought in the LDS movement. Additional information can be obtained in the helpful works by Duane Jeffery<sup>2</sup> and Erich Robert Paul.<sup>3</sup>

At a time when other Christian faiths were still smarting from the

1. From Ralph Waldo Emerson's journal, cited in J. L. Davis et al., eds., *A Treasury of American Literature* (New York: Grolier, 1948), 1:703.

2. Duane Jeffery, "Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Autumn 1974): 41-75.

3. Erich R. Paul, *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). Sadly, Paul died of cancer in October 1994.

# Seers, Savants and Evolution: The Uncomfortable Interface

DUANE E. JEFFREY

Ever since his great synthesis, Darwin's name has been a source of discomfort to the religious world. Too sweeping to be fully fathomed, too revolutionary to be easily accepted, but too well documented to be ignored, his concepts of evolution<sup>1</sup> by natural selection have been hotly debated now for well over a century.<sup>2</sup> The facts of evolution as a current and on-going process are there for the observation of any who will exercise the honesty and take the time to look. The question of whether species evolve is no longer open; it has long since been resolved affirmatively.

This is not to say, however, that we understand all the processes at work in evolving populations, or that we can answer unequivocally all the detailed questions concerning life forms in the distant past. But such shortcomings do not negate



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# Some things we know

Although we are not told exactly how the Lord brought about the creative processes, we are taught several essential concepts:

First, God, the Father of all men, instituted the creation of this world as a place for men to come to mortality and progress toward their eternal destiny.

Second, man is the offspring of deity.

Third, the world was not created by chance forces or random accident.

# Some things we know

Fourth, Adam was the first man and the first flesh on the earth (see Reading 2-16 for a definition of “first flesh” [Moses 3:7]).

Fifth, Adam fell from a state of innocence and immortality, and his fall affected all life upon the earth as well as the earth itself.

Sixth, the Atonement of Jesus Christ was planned before the world was ever created so that men could come to a fallen earth, overcome death and their sins, and return to live with God.

# Some things we do not

We do not know exactly how old the earth is.

We do not totally understand how the diversity of life came to be, nor the exact processes by which these life forms came to be in their present condition.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not have an official position regarding evolution or the age of the earth.

<https://ldscriptureteachings.org/2014/01/19/gospel-doctrine-notes-old-testament-lesson-3/>





Why?



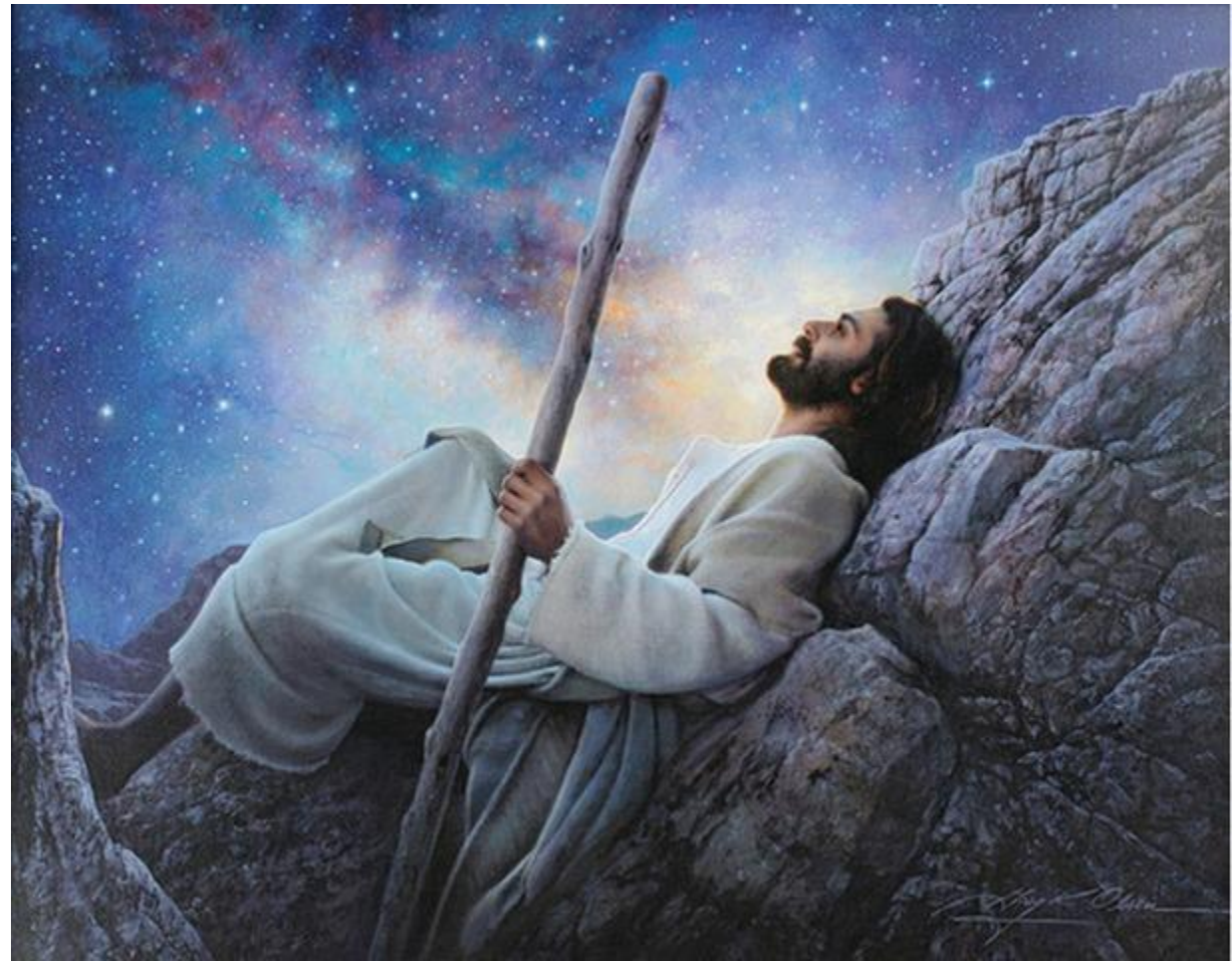
# Why the earth was created

1 Nephi 17.36

2 Nephi 2.23-25

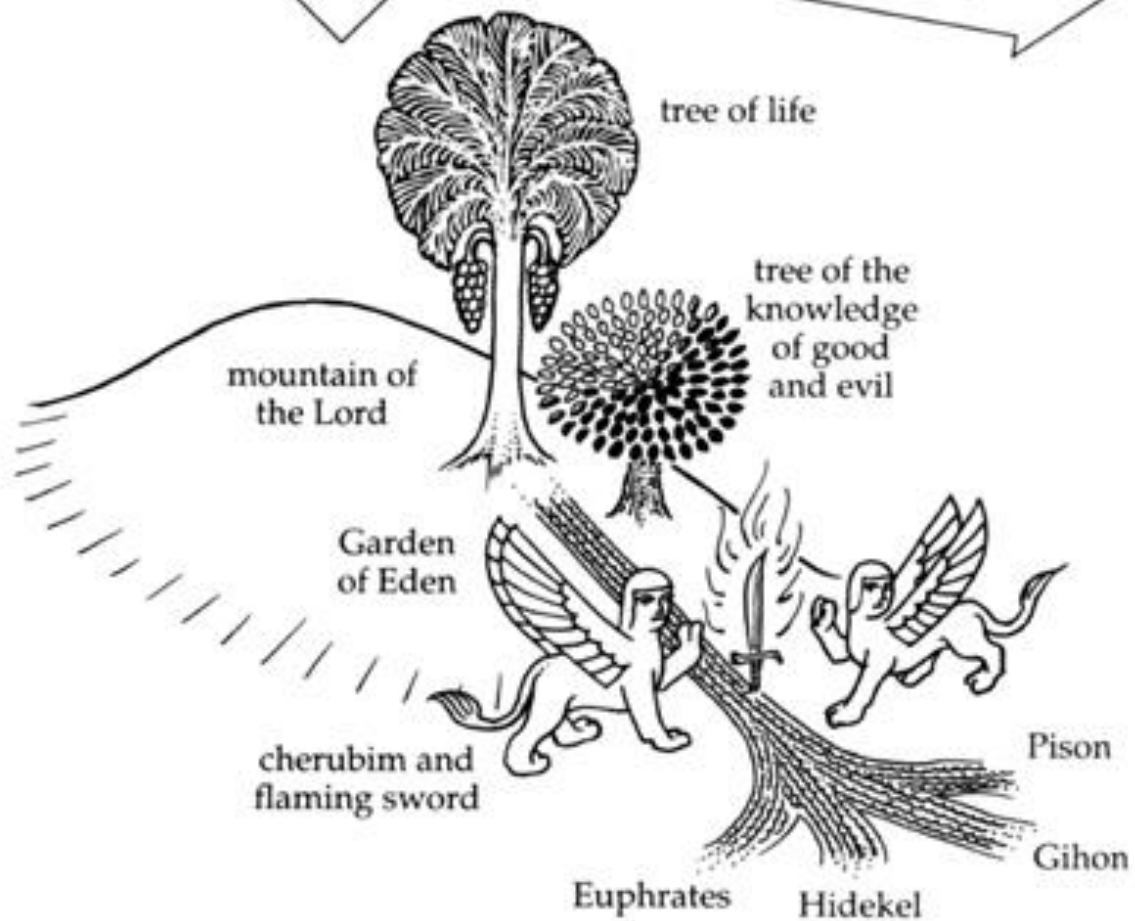
D&C 49.16-17

Moses 1.27-33,39



**CREATION**

**FALL**



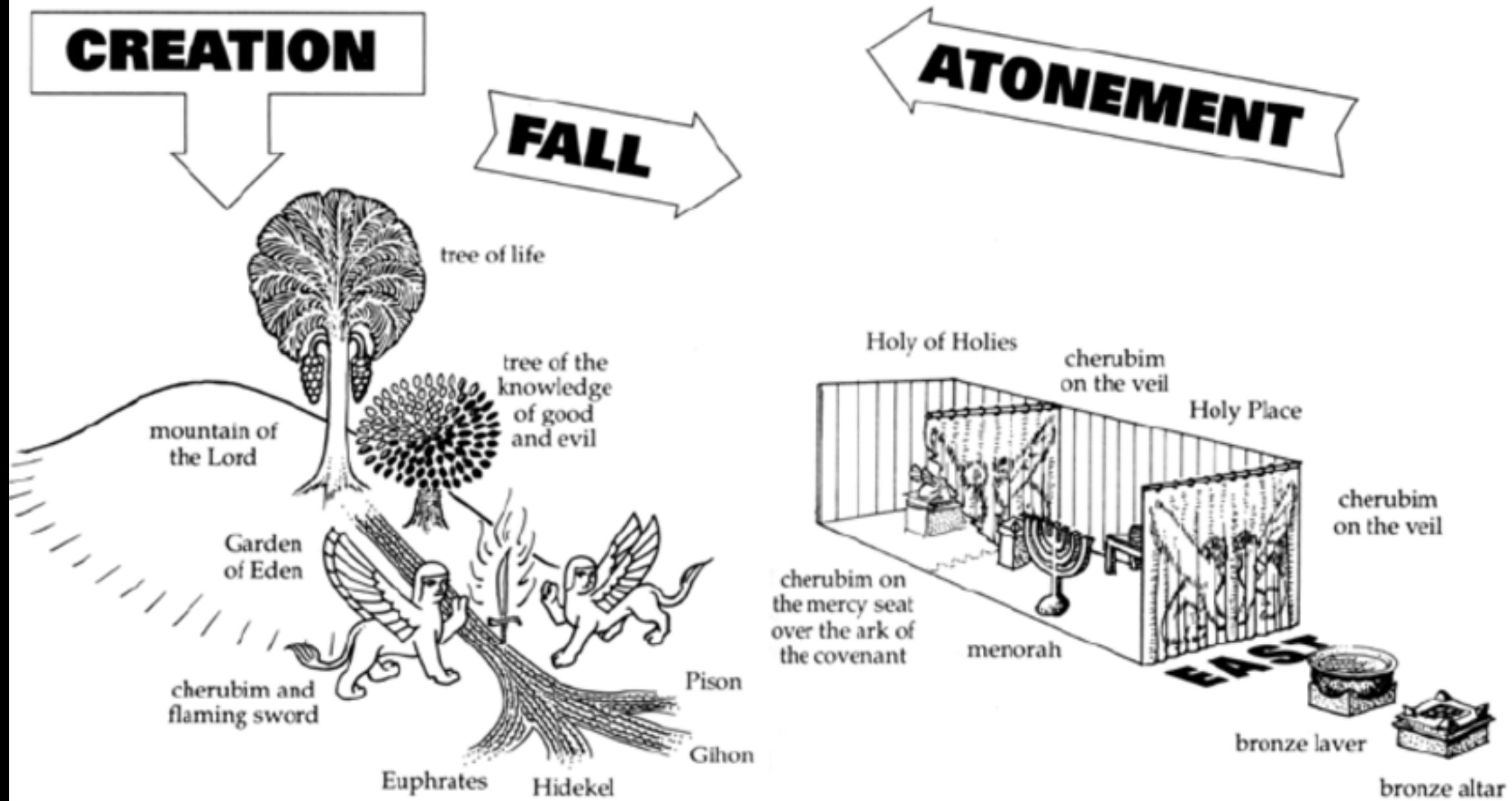


FIGURE 1. Sacred topography of Eden and the temple. Illustration by Michael P. Lyon. Courtesy Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.



DAY	UNIVERSE	MISHKAN
1	"He stretches out the heavens <i>like a curtain.</i> " <b>Psalms 104:2</b>	"You shall make <i>curtains . . .</i> " <b>Exodus 26:7</b>
2	"Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and <i>let it divide . . .</i> " <b>Genesis 1:6</b>	". . . and the veil <i>shall divide</i> the holy place from the most holy for you." <b>Exodus 26:33</b>
3	God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered together..." <b>Genesis 1:9</b>	"You are to make a basin of bronze...for washing. Place it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it." <b>Exodus 30:18</b>
4	"Let there be lights in the dome of the sky..." <b>Genesis 1:14</b>	"You are to make a menorah of pure gold..." <b>Exodus 25:31</b>
5	". . . let birds fly above the earth in the open dome of the sky." <b>Genesis 1:20</b>	"The cherubim will have their wings spread out above..." <b>Exodus 25:20</b>
6	"God created man in his own image..." <b>Genesis 1:27</b>	"Bring Aaron your brother..." <b>Exodus 28:1</b>
7	"The heavens and the earth were finished, and all their vast array." <b>Genesis 2:1</b>	"Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting was finished... " <b>Exodus 39:32</b>

# Salvation comes because of the Fall

“Just as surely as salvation comes because of the Atonement, so also salvation comes because of the Fall. ...

“And be it also remembered that the Fall was made possible because an infinite Creator ... made the earth and man and all forms of life in such a state that they could fall. ... All things were so created that they could fall or change, and thus was introduced the type and kind of existence needed to put into operation all of the terms and conditions of the Father’s eternal plan of salvation.

“This first temporal creation of all things ... was paradisiacal in nature. In the primeval and Edenic day all forms of life lived in a higher and different state than now prevails. The coming fall would take them downward and forward and onward. Death and procreation had yet to enter the world” (Bruce R. McConkie, “Christ and the Creation,” Ensign, June 1982, 9).

# The main pillars of our theology are centered in the family

“In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have a theology of the family that is based on the Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement. The Creation of the earth provided a place where families could live. God created a man and a woman who were the two essential halves of a family. It was part of Heavenly Father’s plan that Adam and Eve be sealed and form an eternal family.





“The Fall provided a way for the family to grow. Adam and Eve were family leaders who chose to have a mortal experience. The Fall made it possible for them to have sons and daughters.

“The Atonement allows for the family to be sealed together eternally. It allows for families to have eternal growth and perfection. The plan of happiness, also called the plan of salvation, was a plan created for families. The rising generation need to understand that the main pillars of our theology are centered in the family”

(Julie B. Beck, “Teaching the Doctrine of the Family,” Ensign, Mar. 2011, 12).





Why is it important to understand that the earth was created to help exalt individuals and families?