

Moses 3 — Spiritual Before Temporal — the Garden, the Rib, and the One-Flesh Covenant

Moses 3: the Sabbath, the spiritual-before-temporal creation, the forming of Adam from the dust, the planting of Eden, the naming of the animals, the helper corresponding to him, and the founding of marriage. The restored Genesis 2.

Moses 2 gave you the cosmos in seven days; Moses 3 zooms all the way in — to one garden, one man, one rib, one marriage. The restored Genesis 2. Two things go past the Bible's account: verse 5 says God created everything *spiritually* before it existed *naturally* — premortal life stretched to cover the whole creation — and verse 24 turns one wedding into the blueprint for all of them. The God who hung the worlds kneels down to shape a man from mud and breathe into him.

Insights

- 1. 3:3 — time made holy first.** God “sanctified” the seventh day — and the very first thing made holy in scripture is not a place or a person but a *day*. Holiness starts in time you set apart, right where you are. The Sabbath was always a rehearsal of the rest at the end of everything.
- 2. 3:5 — a creation that happened twice.** *I created all things... spiritually, before they were naturally upon the face of the earth.* Everything — plants, animals, the earth — had a backstage before it had a stage. Premortal life isn't only about us; the whole creation has that two-story shape.
- 3. 3:7 — dust plus breath.** A dust-statue lies there until God leans down and breathes; only then is it “a living soul.” You are body and spirit together — neither alone is the whole of you, which is why the body matters and why resurrection, not escape, is the hope.
- 4. 3:17 — the gift inside the prohibition.** The Bible gives the command and the warning; Moses 3 adds a clause — *thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee*. God forbids the fruit and hands over the freedom to choose against him in the same breath. He wanted to be chosen, not obeyed by something that couldn't do otherwise.
- 5. 3:18 — the one thing not good.** Six times God called his work “good.” Now, for the only time, something is “not good” — and it isn't sin or the serpent. It's solitude. The one gap in a perfect world is that the man is alone.
- 6. 3:24 — one flesh.** *Therefore shall a man... cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.* One wedding becomes the pattern for all of them — the verse Jesus reaches back and quotes to settle the question of divorce.

Hebrew Word Studies

shabbat / qiddesh (שַׁבָּת / קִדְּשׁ) — **rest, cessation / to sanctify, set apart vv. 1–3.** *Shabbat* comes from a verb, *shavat*, that just means “to stop.” The Sabbath is, at root, the day God stopped — not collapsed, stopped. And *qiddesh* is the word for making something holy, setting it apart for God's use — the word used later for the firstborn, for the tabernacle, for Israel before Sinai. Here's the detail I love: the very first thing God makes holy in all of scripture is not a place or a person or an object. It's a *day*. Time gets sanctified before anything else. Which tells you something about where holiness starts — not in a building you travel to, but in time you set apart right where you are. The writer of Hebrews says there's still “a rest (sabbatismos) for the people of God” (Heb. 4:9), something we're still walking toward. The Sabbath was never only about a Saturday. It was a rehearsal of the rest at the end of everything.

nishmat chayyim / nephesh chayyah (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים / נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה) — **breath of lives / living soul v. 7.** Two phrases, and the grammar repays a close look. *Nishmat chayyim*, “breath of life” — except *chayyim* is plural, “lives.” God breathes plural-life into Adam: natural life, spiritual life, the life that outlasts death, all at once. And *nephesh chayyah*, “living soul” — here's the surprise: that exact phrase is used back in Genesis 1:20 for the *animals*. The word “soul” by itself doesn't separate us from the creatures. What separates Adam isn't that he has a *nephesh* — it's the *nishmat chayyim*, the breath that came straight from God's own mouth. So a human being is dust plus God's breath — body and spirit together. And the Restoration is emphatic that you need both: “the spirit and the body are the soul of man” (D&C 88:15), and the two of them, “inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy” (D&C 93:33). That's why the body matters, and why resurrection matters: the soul isn't the spirit escaping the body. It's the two of them, reunited and never parted again.

ezer kenegdo / lo tov (עֶזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ / לֹא טוֹב) — **a help corresponding to him / not good vv. 18, 20.** This is one of the most misread phrases in the Bible, so it's worth getting right. “Help meet” — people hear it as “assistant,” someone lesser. But the

Hebrew is *ezer kenegdo*, and look at each half. *Ezer*, "help," is a word the Old Testament most often uses for *God himself*: "my help comes from the LORD" (Ps. 121:2); "he is our help and our shield" (Ps. 33:20). It's not a junior word; it's a word for a rescuer, a strong helper. And *kenegdo* means "corresponding to him," "matching him," "alongside him" — a counterpart, not a subordinate. So *ezer kenegdo* is a strong helper who stands face-to-face with him as his equal and his match. And it's the cure for the one thing in all creation that was "not good" — *lo tov* — the man being alone. That tells you what marriage is, in this account: not an optional decoration on a finished life, but the architectural answer to the only gap God left in Eden. The image of God, remember, was "male and female" — and here's the gap being filled.

davaq / basar echad (דָּבַק / בָּשָׂר אֶחָד) — **cleave, stick to / one flesh v. 24.** *Davaq*, "cleave," is the word for the strongest kind of sticking-to — it's how Ruth "clave" to Naomi and refused to leave her (Ruth 1:14), how Israel is told to "cleave" to the Lord (Deut. 10:20). It's covenant-glue. And then "one flesh," *basar echad* — and that little word *echad*, "one," is the same "one" as the great confession of Israel's faith: "the LORD our God is one (*echad*) LORD" (Deut. 6:4). The oneness of a married couple is written in the same word as the oneness of God. That's not an accident of vocabulary; it's the whole theology of marriage in a syllable. When Jesus prays "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee" (Jn. 17:21), he's praying for us to share the very oneness this verse points at. The Restoration's sealing of marriage "for time and all eternity" (D&C 132:19) is just this one-flesh taken all the way home — the oneness of a man and woman rehearsing the oneness of God.

Apocryphal Correlations — the old books beside the restored text

Jubilees 3:8-14, 27. Adam was brought into Eden forty days after he was formed, and Eve eighty — the exact intervals of the purification law for a mother bearing a son or daughter (Lev. 12) — because "the garden of Eden is the holy of holies." An ancient text read Eden as a TEMPLE and Adam as its priest. No English until 1888 — unavailable to Joseph, who restored a Moses 3 where Adam keeps the garden in the language of priestly service.

2 Enoch 30:8-14. God made Adam "a second angel, honorable, great, and glorious," a king set in Eden — a high, crowned Adam that fits the Restoration's Adam (Michael, the Ancient of Days) far better than the diminished Adam of later tradition. Slavonic; unknown in the West until 1896.

Life of Adam and Eve. The Adam-Eve cycle, triple-witnessed (Latin, Greek, Georgian) — the source-stream drawn on heavily in Moses 4 and 5.

Wisdom of Solomon 7:7-22. Wisdom as the pre-existent "fashioner of all things" — a faint echo of Moses 3:5's spiritual creation before the temporal. Honest note: in the KJV Apocrypha, available to Joseph.

Canon = Moses, the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants. The books above are extra-canonical witnesses, not scripture; the Church takes no position on them. Read per D&C 91. The Jubilees Eden-as-temple reading — Adam as first priest — matches the Restoration without any line of transmission to Joseph.

Where the threads lead

Marriage all the way home. Moses 3:24; Matthew 19:4-6 (Christ quotes it); Ephesians 5:31-32 (the mystery of Christ and the Church); D&C 132:19 (sealed for time and eternity). One flesh, taken to exaltation.

Spirit and body are the soul. Moses 3:7; D&C 88:15; D&C 93:33-34 — spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fulness of joy; resurrection reunites them for good.

Created spiritually first. Moses 3:5; D&C 29:31-32; Hebrews 8:5 (the earthly is patterned on the heavenly) — the visible world is the second draft of one God made first in spirit.

How the chapter changes the reader

Moses 3 lays four foundations under an ordinary life. You are dust AND breath — body and spirit, neither alone the whole of you. Marriage is architecture, not ornament — the answer to the one thing God called "not good," a rehearsal in two people of the oneness that is God's own life. Agency came before any commandment — God wanted to be chosen. And the world you see is the second draft of a world made first in spirit. You go back to this chapter at every wedding, every Sabbath, and every hour you wonder what a person is worth. The answer it keeps giving: dust that God stooped down to breathe into.