

Link to Online Lesson: [“Seek Ye for the Kingdom of God”](#)

Class Member Reading: Jacob 1 - 4

Jacob 1

Seems like Jacob didn't really take to record keeping, which results in his book ending up as a hodge podge of sermons, quotations, and an odd controversy story.

1 For behold, it came to pass that fifty and five years had passed away from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem; wherefore, Nephi gave me, Jacob, a commandment concerning the small plates, upon which these things are engraven. This indicates Nephi had no posterity to charge with the task, counter to his expectations (In 1 Ne. 6:6 Nephi says he will give commandment unto “his seed, that they shall not occupy these plates with things which are not of worth unto the children of men.” In 1 Ne. 19:4 Nephi says that he gave a commandment that the large plates should pass from “one generation to another” and “one prophet to another”; that increase in generalization might imply he didn't have sons?).

2 And he gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these plates a few of the things which I considered to be **most precious**; that I should not touch, save it were lightly, concerning the history of this people which are called the people of Nephi.

3 For he said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other plates, and that I should preserve these plates and hand them down **unto my seed**, from generation to generation. Nephi thought the plates would be passed through his seed, but now it is passing through Jacob's. King Benjamin seems to have been a descendent of Nephi (Words of Mormon 1:10), but that also allows for the possibility that Sam was his true direct ancestor (2 Ne. 4:11, “thy seed shall be numbered among his seed” and the fact Nephi seems not to have had sons and Sam is the only one of the –ites not mentioned at all... even Ishmaelites and Zoramites are mentioned!) Isn't close reading fun?

4 And if there were **preaching** which was sacred, or **revelation** which was great, or **prophecy**, that I should engraven the heads of them upon

these plates, and touch upon them as much as it were possible, for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of our people.

5 For because of **faith and great anxiety**, it truly had been made manifest unto us concerning our people, what things should happen unto them. **Jacob really does seem like a sensitive, anxious soul.**

6 And we also had many revelations, and the spirit of much prophecy; wherefore, we knew of Christ and his kingdom, which should come.

7 Wherefore we **labored diligently** among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God, that they might enter into his rest, lest by any means he should swear in his wrath they should not enter in, as in the provocation in the days of temptation while the children of Israel were in the wilderness. **A reference that would be particularly meaningful to Jacob, as he was the first child not to know Jerusalem but to have spent his childhood in the desert.**

8 Wherefore, we would to God that we could persuade all men not to rebel against God, to provoke him to anger, but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world; wherefore, I, Jacob, take it upon me to fulfil the commandment of my brother Nephi. **Do we truly provoke God to anger? Indignation perhaps...**

9 Now Nephi began to be old, and he saw that he must soon die; wherefore, he **anointed a man** to be a king and a ruler over his people now, according to the reigns of the kings. **The vagueness indicates this man was not Nephi’s son.**

10 The people having loved Nephi exceedingly, he having been a great protector for them, having wielded the sword of Laban in their defence, and having labored in all his days for their welfare—

11 Wherefore, the people were desirous to retain in remembrance his name. And whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people, second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings; and thus they were called by the people, let them be of whatever name they would. **Quite possibly Sam’s descendants.**

12 And it came to pass that Nephi died.

13 Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites,

Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. (Note that Sam is the only one missing)

14 But I, Jacob, shall not hereafter distinguish them by these names, but I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi, and those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi, according to the reigns of the kings.

15 And now it came to pass that the people of Nephi, under the reign of the second king, began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in **wicked practices**, such as like unto David of old desiring many wives and concubines, and also Solomon, his son. Was this second king Jacob's nephew?

16 Yea, and they also began to **search much gold and silver**, and began to be lifted up somewhat in **pride**. Immorality/disrespect, materialism, pride.

17 Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, **having first obtained mine errand from the Lord**.

18 For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated **priests and teachers** of this people, by the hand of Nephi.

19 And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day. Rigorous approach to stewardship and responsibility (also see 2 Ne. 9:44 where Jacob says he "shakes his garments" of the blood/responsibility of his people)

Jacob 2

1 The words which Jacob, the brother of Nephi, spake unto the people of Nephi, after the death of Nephi: (likely Jacob's own words, interesting he prefaced it this way)

2 Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the **responsibility** which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with **soberness**, and that I might **rid my garments of your sins**, I come up into the **temple** this day that I might declare unto you the word of God.

3 And ye yourselves know that I have hitherto been **diligent** in the office of my calling; but I this day am **weighed down** with much more desire and anxiety for the welfare of your souls than I have hitherto been. Pay close attention to the words Jacob uses, which reveal his pained earnestness. He did not share his brother's (sometimes overbearing) confidence.

4 For behold, as yet, ye have been obedient unto the word of the Lord, which I have given unto you.

5 But behold, hearken ye unto me, and know that by the help of the all-powerful Creator of heaven and earth I can tell you concerning your thoughts, how that ye are beginning to labor in sin (evocative wording), which sin appeareth very abominable unto me, yea, and abominable unto God.

6 Yea, it **grieveth my soul** and **causeth me to shrink with shame before the presence of my Maker**, that I must testify unto you concerning the wickedness of your hearts. Look how personally Jacob takes the sins of his people.

7 And also it **grieveth me** that I must use so much boldness of speech concerning you, before your wives and your children, many of whose **feelings are exceedingly tender and chaste and delicate** before God, which thing is pleasing unto God;

8 And it supposeth me that they have come up hither to hear the **pleasing word of God**, yea, the word which **healeth the wounded soul**.

9 Wherefore, it **burdeneth my soul** that I should be **constrained**, because of the strict commandment which I have received from God, to admonish you according to your crimes, to enlarge the wounds of those who are already wounded, instead of **consoling** and **healing** their wounds; and those who have not been wounded, instead of feasting upon the pleasing word of God have daggers placed to pierce their souls and **wound** their delicate minds. Again, note how vividly Jacob speaks.

10 But, notwithstanding the greatness of the task, I must do according to the strict commands of God, and **tell you concerning your wickedness** and abominations, in the presence of the pure in heart, and the broken heart, and under the glance of the piercing eye of the Almighty God. I strongly relate to the challenge of speaking or writing to an audience with

radically different, even contrasting needs. This is an issue I keep in mind every episode of the podcast.

11 Wherefore, I must tell you the truth according to the **plainness** of the word of God. For behold, as I inquired of the Lord, thus came the word unto me, saying: Jacob, get thou up into the temple on the morrow, and declare the word which I shall give thee unto this people.

12 And now behold, my brethren, this is the word which I declare unto you, that many of you have begun to search for gold, and for silver, and for all manner of precious ores, in the which this land, which is a land of promise unto you and to your seed, doth abound most plentifully.

13 And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained **more abundantly than that of your brethren** ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren because **ye suppose that ye are better than they**. As President Benson stated, pride is relentlessly a sin of *comparison*. Pride has to not only be good, but *better* or *more* than another. Thus the sin is not having (whether goods or gifts), but the comparing and needing to be better, especially needing to put another down to feel better.

14 And now, my brethren, do ye suppose that God justifieth you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemneth you, and if ye persist in these things his judgments must speedily come unto you.

15 O that he would show you that he can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye he can smite you to the dust!

16 O that he would rid you from this iniquity and abomination. And, O that ye would listen unto the word of his commands, and **let not this pride of your hearts destroy your souls!**

Verses 17-19 describes God's will in clear and challenging ways concerning material wealth and its use.

17 Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

18 But **before** ye seek for riches, **seek ye for the kingdom of God**. Priorities and intentions make all the difference. When we get ourselves in

order, we do things for good, healthy reasons.

19 And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and **ye will seek them for the intent to do good**—to **clothe** the naked, and to **feed** the hungry, and to **liberate** the captive, and **administer relief** to the sick and the afflicted.

20 And now, my brethren, I have spoken unto you concerning **pride**; and those of you which have afflicted your neighbor, and persecuted him because ye were proud in your hearts, of the things which God hath given you, what say ye of it?

21 Do ye not suppose that **such things are abominable unto him who created all flesh**? And the **one being is as precious in his sight as the other**. To see each other this way requires overcoming our natural human nature. And all flesh is of the dust; and for the selfsame end hath he created them, that they should keep his commandments and glorify him forever. The Mormon perspective on glorifying God is so important and illuminating—God does not need a beautiful choir of angelic harpists; God needs children who do good and work to become like them.

22 And now I make an end of speaking unto you concerning this pride. And were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a **grosser crime**, my heart would rejoice exceedingly because of you.

23 But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they **seek to excuse themselves** in committing **whoredoms**, because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.

24 Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. **This statement is directly contradicted by D&C 132:38-39.**

25 Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph.

26 Wherefore, I the Lord God will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old.

27 Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For **there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife**;

and concubines he shall have none;

28 For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts. **Why wouldn't God delight in chastity in general, of both men and women? This is one of many scriptures whose language we need to update to align with the true meaning (I realize “true meaning” is problematic, but theological arguments can and should be made).**

29 Wherefore, this people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of Hosts, or cursed be the land for their sakes.

30 For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things. **Interestingly, polygamy (or polygyny) does not always result in more offspring than stable monogamous relationships (If one man can get ten women pregnant, then ten men could get ten women pregnant).**

31 For behold, I, the Lord, have seen the sorrow, and heard the mourning of the daughters of my people in the land of Jerusalem, yea, and in all the lands of my people, because of the wickedness and abominations of their husbands. **I am grateful that we have this scripture where God directly says “I hear my daughters”.**

32 And I will not suffer, saith the Lord of Hosts, that the cries of the fair daughters of this people, which I have led out of the land of Jerusalem, shall come up unto me against the men of my people, saith the Lord of Hosts.

33 For they shall not lead away captive the daughters of my people because of their tenderness, save I shall visit them with a sore curse, even unto destruction; for they shall not commit whoredoms, like unto them of old, saith the Lord of Hosts.

34 And now behold, my brethren, ye know that these commandments were given to our father, Lehi; wherefore, ye have known them before; and ye have come unto great condemnation; for ye have done these things which ye ought not to have done.

35 Behold, **ye have done greater iniquities than the Lamanites**, our brethren. Ye have **broken the hearts** of your tender wives, and **lost the confidence** of your children, because of your **bad examples** before them; and the **sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you**. And

because of the strictness of the word of God, which cometh down against you, **many hearts died**, pierced with deep wounds. Such an evocative, direct verse with sobering personal application. We can break hearts and lose confidence through our mistakes. Regaining trust and healing broken hearts is among the most difficult tasks in relationships. We have to be aware of the examples we set, day by day. I can imagine that the sobbings of the vulnerable provoke God’s indignation like nothing else—and should ours as well.

Jacob 3

1 But behold, I, Jacob, would speak unto you that are **pure in heart**. Look unto God with **firmness of mind**, and pray unto him with **exceeding faith**, and he will **console you in your afflictions**, and he will **plead your cause**, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction.

2 O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and **feast upon his love**; for ye may, if your **minds are firm**, forever. What does “firmness of mind” mean? Note the repetition. That would be a good question to discuss. For me it speaks to mental discipline and focus, focus on good and goals and true principles. This kind of “firmness of mind” transforms character, and a pure heart provides the target for the mind.

3 But, wo, wo, unto you that are not pure in heart, that are filthy this day before God; for except ye repent the land is cursed for your sakes; and the Lamanites, which are not filthy like unto you, nevertheless they are cursed with a sore cursing, shall scourge you even unto destruction.

4 And the time speedily cometh, that except ye repent they shall possess the land of your inheritance, and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you.

5 Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursing which hath come upon their skins, **are more righteous than you**; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our father—that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them.

6 And now, this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore, **because of this observance, in keeping this commandment**, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people. Powerful verses that seem to state that because of this one single observance, God will save the Lamanites, that this area where they are “more righteous”—family relationships—God will preserve them. This speaks to the importance of love and respect and loyalty.

7 Behold, **their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands; and their husbands and their wives love their children**; and their unbelief and their hatred towards you is because of the iniquity of their fathers; wherefore, how much better are you than they, in the sight of your great Creator?

8 O my brethren, I fear that unless ye shall repent of your sins that their skins will be whiter than yours, when ye shall be brought with them before the throne of God. Tricky wording. Metaphorical surely? The next verse makes it sound literal.

9 Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them because of the darkness of their skins; neither shall ye revile against them because of their filthiness; but ye shall remember your own filthiness, and remember that their filthiness came because of their fathers. Important principle of focusing on how *we* can improve rather than on judging others.

10 Wherefore, ye shall remember your children, how that ye have grieved their hearts because of the example that ye have set before them; and also, remember that ye may, because of your filthiness, bring your children unto destruction, and their sins be heaped upon your heads at the last day. Nothing causes fear and trembling like parenting... such a humbling responsibility. I hope we can be mindful of the examples we set.

11 O my brethren, hearken unto my words; **arouse the faculties of your souls; shake yourselves that ye may awake from the slumber of death**; and loose yourselves from the pains of hell that ye may not become angels to the devil, to be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone which is the second death. Echoes of Lehi’s words. As we have explored earlier, “waking up” is a powerful, needed principle in our lives.

12 And now I, Jacob, spake many more things unto the people of Nephi, warning them against fornication and lasciviousness (**sexually impure thoughts and attitudes**), and every kind of sin, telling them the awful consequences of them.

13 And a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, which now began to be numerous, cannot be written upon these plates; but many of their proceedings are written upon the larger plates, and their wars, and their contentions, and the reigns of their kings.

14 These plates are called the plates of Jacob, and they were made by the hand of Nephi. And I make an end of speaking these words.

Jacob 4

1 Now behold, it came to pass that I, Jacob, having ministered much unto my people in word, (and I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the **difficulty of engraving** our words upon plates) and we know that the things which we write upon plates must remain;

2 But whatsoever things we write upon anything save it be upon plates must perish and vanish away; but we can write a few words upon plates, which will give our children, and also our beloved brethren, a small degree of knowledge concerning us, or concerning their fathers—

3 Now in this thing we do **rejoice**; and we **labor diligently** to engraven these words upon plates, hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them with **thankful hearts**, and look upon them that they may learn with **joy** and not with sorrow, neither with contempt, concerning their first parents. **Do we have a joyful and thankful attitude toward our forebears?**

4 For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that **we knew of Christ**, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us.

5 Behold, they believed in Christ and worshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his name. And for this intent we keep the law of Moses, it **pointing our souls to him**; and for this cause it is **sanctified unto us for righteousness**, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son. **What is the purpose of our religious observance? Does it point us toward God and sanctify us?**

6 Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.

7 Nevertheless, the **Lord God showeth us our weakness** that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.

8 Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God.

9 For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created by the power of his word. Wherefore, if God being able to speak and the world was, and to speak and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure?

10 Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to **take counsel** from his hand. For behold, ye yourselves know that **he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works.**

11 Wherefore, beloved brethren, **be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ**, his Only Begotten Son, and ye may obtain a resurrection, according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ, and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God, having faith, and

obtained a good hope of glory in him before he manifesteth himself in the flesh.

12 And now, beloved, marvel not that I tell you these things; for why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him, as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?

13 Behold, my brethren, he that prophesieth, let him **prophecy to the understanding of men**; for the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things **as they really are**, and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls. But behold, we are not witnesses alone in these things; for God also spake them unto prophets of old.

14 But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by **looking beyond the mark**, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble. *Very problematic portrayal of the Jews, but we can apply this question to our lives, and ask how we may be "looking beyond the mark".*

15 And now I, Jacob, am led on by the Spirit unto prophesying; for I perceive by the workings of the Spirit which is in me, that by the stumbling of the Jews they will reject the stone upon which they might build and have safe foundation.

16 But behold, according to the scriptures, this stone shall become the great, and the last, and the only sure foundation, upon which the Jews can build.

17 And now, my beloved, how is it possible that these, after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner?

18 Behold, my beloved brethren, I will unfold this mystery unto you; if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit, and stumble because of my over anxiety for you. *Lead into Jacob 5.*

Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 185

BoM Lesson 12: “Seek Ye for the Kingdom of God”

Additional Reading: N/A

Scripture Chain: N/A
