



16. Introduction to the Book of Jacob; Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1–3)

“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. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. 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.” (2:17-19)

Hymn 219, “Because I Have Been Given Much”

Because I have been given much, I too must give;
Because of thy great bounty, Lord, each day I live
I shall divide my gifts from thee
With ev'ry brother that I see
Who has the need of help from me

Because I have been sheltered, fed by thy good care,
I cannot see another's lack and I not share
My glowing fire, my loaf of bread
My roof's safe shelter overhead,
That he too may be comforted.

Because I have been blessed by thy great love, dear Lord,
I'll share thy love again, according to thy word.
I shall give love to those in need;
I'll show that love by word and deed:
Thus shall my thanks be thanks indeed.

The Book of Jacob

- Authorship (who): **Jacob**
 - fifth son of Lehi and brother of Nephi
 - "priest and teacher," but holder of Melchizedek, not solely Aaronic, priesthood (2 Nephi 5:26; 6:2; Jacob 1:18)
 - Prophet and, especially, a witness of Christ (2 Nephi 2:4)
 - Scribe and record keeper (Jacob 1:1-3)
- Period Covered (when)
 - Opens at the death of Nephi (55 years after Lehi left Jerusalem, approximately 544 B.C.)
 - Written later, perhaps at the end of Jacob's life when he was assembling his teachings and history
- Transmission (how)
 - **Inscribed his own teachings and writings directly onto the Small Plates**, which Mormon included with the Gold Plates (his abridgment of other Nephite records)

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

3

Structure

- Introductory chapter (**narrative**, 1:1-19)
- **Sermon at the Temple** (2:1-3:14, **spoken sermon**)
- **Discourse on God's relationship with Israel** (**written treatise**, 4:1-6:13)
 - Includes a quotation of Zeno's **Allegory of the Olive Tree** (5:1-77)
- **Historical material**
 - Encounter with Sherem (7:1-23, **dramatic episode**)
 - Struggles with the Lamanites (7:24-25, **narrative summary**)
 - Jacob's farewell (**direct address to readers**, 7:26-27)

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

4

Jacob's Introduction (1:1-19)

- Nephi's charge regarding the record (1:1-4)
- Jacob's concern for the future of his people (1:5-8)
 - **Mission:** persuade the people to come unto Christ and partake of the goodness of God (1:7)
 - "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 . . .**" (1:8)
- **Nephite history following Nephi's death (1:9-17)**
 - Development of the kingship
 - Strife between Nephites and Lamanites
 - **Growing wealth, pride, and wickedness**
- Jacob's responsibility (1:18-19)
 - "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 . . ." (1:19)

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

5

Jacob's Sermon at the Temple

- Audience
 - People of Nephi at the temple in the Land Nephi (see 2:11)
- Occasion: after the death of Nephi (2:2)
- Genre
 - A **sermon** (delivered orally) calling the Nephites to repentance
- Themes
 - **Pride**
 - **Unchastity**
- Outline
 - Preamble (2:1-11)
 - Jacob's compelled to chastise the Nephites and his determination to speak plainly against sin
 - **Rebuke for pride induced by riches** (2:12-22)
 - **Rebuke for whoredoms** (2:23-35)
 - *Not just prostitution in the narrow sense, but debasing sexual relations generally*
 - **Consolation for the pure** and **condemnation of the impure** (3:1-11)
 - Conclusion (3:12-24)

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

6

Pride and the Danger of Riches

- “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.**” (2:13)
 - **Providence**: divine guidance or care
 - **What other things or abilities can we happen to have more abundantly than others that lead to dangerous pride?**
 - The example of “social capital!”
- “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. But **before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.** 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 . . .” (2:17-19)
 - How does obtaining a hope in Christ help us not misuse our resources and abilities?

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

7

The Growing Problem of Sexual Immorality among the Nephites

- “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 . . .” (2:23)
- Nephite sin: **unauthorized plural marriage**
 - **Perhaps connected with pride** (many wives seen as an indicator of social and economic status)
 - **Plural marriage allowed only by commandment to raise up a righteous seed** (see Jacob 2:30 and D&C 132:63)
 - **Unrighteous Nephites justified themselves by the examples of David and Solomon both of whom abused the principles**

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

8

Law of Chastity

- Definitions
 - No sexual activity outside of legitimate marriage
 - Proper activity, respect, and love within marriage
- Effects of unchastity
 - “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.” (2:35)
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, Jeffrey R. Holland, “Personal Purity,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 75ff (online)
 - Follow up of his 1988 devotional, “Of Souls, Symbols, and Sacraments”
 - Right of God: giving and taking life
 - God shares the right of procreation with us
 - Symbolism of marital intimacy
- **Recall the marriage-symbolism of our covenant relationship with God and Christ**

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

9

Consolation and Condemnation

- **Jacob's words to the 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 . . . 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.” (3:1-2)
- **Jacob's words to the transgressors**
 - “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.** 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.”
- **The positive example of the Lamanites** (in this regard at least, 3:5-9)
 - “Behold, their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands; and their husbands and their wives love their children . . .” (3:7)
 - “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.” (3:8)

10/24/2005

16. Jacob Intro, Jacob's Sermon at the Temple (Jacob 1-3)

10