

April 1-7, 2024

Jacob 1–4

“BE RECONCILED UNTO GOD THROUGH THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST”

Summary: *The words of his preaching unto his brethren. He confoundeth a man who seeketh to overthrow the doctrine of Christ. A few words concerning the history of the people of Nephi.*

Jacob 1. Jacob and Joseph seek to persuade men to believe in Christ and keep His commandments—Nephi dies—Wickedness prevails among the Nephites. About 544–421 B.C.

Jacob 2. Jacob denounces the love of riches, pride, and unchastity—Men may seek riches to help their fellowmen—The Lord commands that no man among the Nephites may have more than one wife—The Lord delights in the chastity of women. About 544–421 B.C.

Jacob 3. The pure in heart receive the pleasing word of God—Lamanite righteousness exceeds that of the Nephites—Jacob warns against fornication, lasciviousness, and every sin. About 544–421 B.C.

Jacob 4. All the prophets worshiped the Father in the name of Christ—Abraham’s offering of Isaac was in similitude of God and His Only Begotten—Men should reconcile themselves to God through the Atonement—The Jews will reject the foundation stone. About 544–421 B.C.

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

History without prejudice?

It can be understood that there were several records

being kept by the people who left Jerusalem in 600 B.C. Although they were historical, we can see that Jacob was instructed by his father, Nephi, to keep a separate history that dealt more with sacred instructions. These instructions were to lead the people to their identity with their Lord. The late Book of Mormon gives us a history of Jews leaving the land of Israel and going to what is called the land of America. This history is valuable because it is an unprejudiced account. The late Daniel Ludlow (1924-2009), former director of the Correlation Department for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, taught that even true history is usually prejudiced by the writer and his perceptions as he saw events happening. Conversely, true

prophecy does not have prejudice, because it has not happened yet. He also taught that scriptural history has the least amount of prejudice because in most cases it carries a message of future events. It is prophecy, in the form of history. Therefore, the history is accurate. The ancient prophets could not (and would not) write all that happened. They selected to write those things which would apply as lessons of the future.

What “Hundredth Parts” of history are more valuable to me?

(1) Now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people; (3 Nephi 26:6) (2) “Wherefore, I chose these things, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi; and I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people.” (Words of Mormon 1:5) (3) “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.” (Jacob 3:13) (4) And the Lord spake unto Ether, and said unto him: Go forth. And he went forth, and beheld that the words of the Lord had all been fulfilled; and he finished his record; (and the hundredth part I have not written) and he hid them in a manner that the people of Limhi did find them. (Ether 15:33) (5) “But behold, a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, yea, the account of the Lamanites and of the Nephites, and their wars, and contentions, and dissensions, and their preaching, and their prophecies, and their shipping and their building of ships, and their building of temples, and of synagogues and their sanctuaries, and their righteousness, and their wickedness, and their murders, and their robbings, and their plundering, and all manner of abominations and whoredoms, cannot be contained in this work.” (Helaman 3:14) (6) “And there had many things transpired which, in the eyes of some, would be great and marvelous; nevertheless, they cannot all be written in this book; yea, this book cannot contain even a hundredth part of what was done among so many people in the space of twenty and five years . . .” (3 Nephi 5:8)

What are some parallel Jewish thoughts on history?

“Now and again attempts are made to present a systematic history of the Jewish people, but these efforts are relatively few. As early as biblical times records were kept but these have since been lost. The Bible itself is not a history although it contains a vast amount of historical information and is the major literary source for our knowledge of the biblical period.” “The study of Jewish history

continues to grow and, in many cases, helps to deepen Jewish self-identification . . . Jewish nationality and achievement.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What values are still evident in peoples that are still part of God’s covenant?

Jacob’s first recorded “sacred” teaching included a call to repent from focusing so much on wealth accompanied by immorality. These result in the abuse and even the abandonment of the family. This type of biblical instruction is also evident in *Talmudic* teachings. “The rabbis taught that a man is truly ‘rich’ when he is ‘happy with his portion’ --- when he recognizes and appreciates the good in his life. Ultimately, a man’s material poverty or wealth is irrelevant; what is really important is his spiritual worth.” “Like other basic human desires, sex is regarded in a positive light in Jewish teaching, especially as it is the means of fulfilling the first biblical commandment: ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’ Judaism does not encourage the unbridled fulfillment of desire, however, but rather imposes restrictions which raise the act to the level of holiness.” “Detailed legislation concerning sexual behavior can be found in the Bible as well as in the *Talmud* and subsequent rabbinic literature. Celibacy (complete abstinence from all sexual activity) is discouraged as an unnatural state and detrimental to the human personality.” “The primary restriction of sexual activity in Jewish law is that it should take place within marriage, as an expression of love between husband and wife as well as out of a desire to fulfill God’s commandments. An element of holiness is added by the laws of *niddah* (separation during the period of menstruation; which ensure that the couple does not indulge in sex on impulse but rather directs the act to holiness).” “In general, moderation and self-control in sexual activity are encouraged. Chastity, the goal to be aimed for, does not mean

the avoidance of all sex but of illegal sex. This includes adultery, incest, sodomy, rape and seduction. Adultery is defined as sexual relations between a married woman and any man other than her husband." "Judaism encourages modesty as one of the means to chastity. Thus, the Jewish woman is enjoined to dress and act modestly at all times. Furthermore, a man is forbidden to be alone with a woman with whom he is not permitted to have sexual relations from considerations of both chastity and modesty."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What standard of morality is evident among the "Children of Israel?"

The Book of Mormon teachings of Jacob reflect the repeated teachings to the Children of Israel which show concern for family identity and sacredness of marriage, marital companionship and the sanctity of children. "The mother . . . occupied a place of honor next to her spouse. At his death, if no sons were of age, she could become the legal head of the household. Concern for her welfare as a widow was considered the duty of a good society." "The successful marriage in the eyes of the prophets and the rabbis was the most perfect symbol of a meaningful and purposeful relationship and was taken by them as the closest approximation to the idealized relationship between God and Israel, and between Israel and the Torah." "Lo, children are a heritage of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward' ([Psalms 127:3](#)). In Jewish tradition, the central purpose of marriage is to have children. Children are considered a great blessing; they are the hope and the promise of continuing life. The joys of parenthood bring also many responsibilities and it is the parents' religious duty to fulfill them." "As the children grow, they must be educated and trained for their future roles in Jewish life.

The father's duty is to provide for his children, to give them a proper education, to teach them a trade, and to prepare them for marriage." "Great emphasis is placed on the importance of education and religious training, which should begin early in the home. The mother's role is vital since she is the one who creates the home atmosphere in which basic values are fostered and transmitted. She trains her sons and daughters in mitzvot and prepares them for formal education. The rabbis advised parents to be loving but firm in the upbringing of their children, and warned against showing favoritism." "In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue." "Children are obliged to treat their parents with honor and respect. Children must provide dependent parents with food, clothing and personal attention if it is necessary. This obligation is removed from a daughter when she marries." "Children may not abuse their parents. According to the Bible, if a son is extremely rebellious and incorrigible and refuses to mend his ways (*ben sorer u-moreh*), his parents may agree to bring him to the town elders for judgment and punishment, which could be death by stoning. However, there is no record of such punishment ever having been carried out." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How related are the two Israel descendants that believe in "Family?"

As Jacob rebuked the Nephite men for their mistreatment of their wives and children, so have other prophets given the same counsel. Jewish philosophy carries the same theme. "It is said that a man without a wife lives without joy, blessing and good, and that a man should love his wife as himself and respect her more than himself. Women have greater faith than men and greater powers of discernment.

The *Torah*, the greatest joy of the rabbis, is frequently pictured as a woman and is represented as God's daughter and Israel's bride." "In modern Israel, the Declaration of Independence ensures complete equality of political and social rights to all its inhabitants, regardless of religion, race, or sex, but the real Magna Carta of the Israeli woman was the Women's Equal Rights Law of 1951, giving women equal legal status with men. The only field of law in which there remains a degree of discrimination against women is that of personal status. Matters of marriage and divorce come within the exclusive jurisdiction of the religious courts and thus, for example, a divorce must be given by the husband to the wife. On the other hand, in accordance with the *halakhah*, children take the national identity of their mother and not that of their father." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Mistreatment of anybody is simply ungodly. The Jews, as a people, have experienced mistreatment. That probably makes them more concerned about being kind and removing racial prejudice. "In 1975 the UN passed resolution 3379 which equated Zionism with racism. In 1992, U.S. President Bush took a major initiative to have the UN repeal the resolution stating that Israel could not move forward with the peace process in the Middle East as long as the resolution existed. In 1992, the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to revoke the resolution. Following the repeal, UN attitude toward Israel began to change and in October, an Israeli was elected to the executive of the UN's environmental group after being banned for so many years." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Unfortunately, as Jacob taught, wealth leads to immorality. Immorality leads to family abandonment and that leads to discrimination and prejudice. In reflection of this lesson, the history (large plates) was not as important as the lessons of history (small plates). In these few verses,

Jacob uses the repeated lessons of history as a guideline for finding the "Kingdom of God," a family.

THE FAMILY

A PROCLAMATION TO THE WORLD

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND COUNCIL OF THE TWELVE
APOSTLES OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

We, the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, solemnly proclaim that marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children.

All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny. Gender is an essential characteristic of individual premortal, mortal, and eternal identity and purpose.

In the premortal realm, spirit sons and daughters knew and worshipped God as their Eternal Father and accepted His plan by which His children could obtain a physical body and gain earthly experience to progress toward perfection and ultimately realize their divine destiny as heirs of eternal life. The divine plan of happiness enables family relationships to be perpetuated beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants available in holy temples make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally.

The first commandment that God gave to Adam and Eve pertained to their potential for parenthood as husband and wife. We declare that God's commandment for His children to multiply and replenish the earth remains in force. We further declare that God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife.

We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed. We affirm the sanctity of life and of its importance in God's eternal plan.

Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children. "Children are an heritage of the Lord" (**Psalm 127:3**). Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, observe the commandments of God, and be law-abiding citizens wherever they live. Husbands and wives—mothers and fathers—will be held accountable before God for the discharge of these obligations.

The family is ordained of God. Marriage between man and woman is essential to His eternal plan. Children are entitled to birth within the bonds of matrimony, and to be reared by a father and a mother who honor marital vows with complete fidelity. Happiness in family life is most likely to be achieved when founded upon the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities. By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the

necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children. In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners. Disability, death, or other circumstances may necessitate individual adaptation. Extended families should lend support when needed.

We warn that individuals who violate covenants of chastity, who abuse spouse or offspring, or who fail to fulfill family responsibilities will one day stand accountable before God. Further, we warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

This proclamation was read by President Gordon B. Hinckley as part of his message at the General Relief Society Meeting held September 23, 1995, in Salt Lake City, Utah.