

Comments on Jacob 3

In this chapter Jacob interweaves the subject of ch. 2 with that of bigotry (v. 5) and introduces a curse reversal (v. 8).

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. 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.

v1-4 Jacob blesses the righteous among the Nephites (v. 1-2), but warns the wicked among them that they will end up more cursed than the Lamanites unless they repent. If they don't repent, the Lamanites will destroy them and take their lands of inheritance (v. 3-4).

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. 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.

v5-8 The Nephites have generally grown contemptuous of the Lamanites and slander them because of the curse of dark skin upon them. But, Jacob points out their judgement is superficial and meaningless because it is the Nephites who are spiritually more

filthy than the Lamanites. While the Nephites are prostituting their women, the Lamanites are honoring their wives and families and do not permit prostitution among them (v. 5). Because of this, the Lord will spare them until a day comes that they will be a blessed people (v. 6). Thus, they are spiritually better off than the Nephites, because their curse and spiritual darkness is because of ignorance (v. 7) rather than deliberate rebellion. And, so, Jacob fears the Nephites will be found to be spiritually filthy at the Day of Judgement (v. 8).

v5 Notice Jacob categorizes multiple wives, concubinage, and whoredoms separately. The separation is based upon levels of legal commitment. Multiple wives requires full legal commitment, concubinage requires conditional and partial legal commitment, and whoredoms involve no legal commitment.

That whoredoms are categorized separately from the other two also indicates the title "whoredoms" does not include the other two as well. Jacob never accuses the Nephites of taking multiple wives or concubines, only in "whoredoms".

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. 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. 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.

v9-11 Jacob commands the Nephites to abandon their bigotry and faultfinding and focus on their own problems instead (v. 9). They should think about the bad example they have set before their children, and how they may end up dragging their society down to destruction (v. 10). Jacob then closes by pleading with them to shake off this torpor of spiritual death which is leading them down to hell (v. 11).

v10 The same curse laid on Laman and Lemuel by Lehi in 2 Ne. 4:6 is leveled at the present Nephites because of their rebellion. Jacob is thus ironically playing on their bigotry to say they are no better than Laman and Lemuel.

12 And now I, Jacob, spake many more things unto the people of Nephi, warning them against fornication and lasciviousness, 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.

v12-14 Jacob closes off the details of the sermon by stating he warned them off of all fornications and every kind of lasciviousness (v. 12).

He states that with the growing population of the community it becomes increasingly difficult to document all that occurs among them. But, a more verbose and historical account can be found on the large plates (v. 13). But, these are the small plates, which were given to Jacob by Nephi (v. 14) so the record here is to be selective per 1:2.

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