Lesson 12
Jacob 1–4

Jacob 1

Verses 2–4: What things did Jacob tell Nephi he should write about? Why that and not the history of his people? Later Mormon includes more of what we would call history rather than making it a record of sacred things only. Why?

Verse 7: What does Jacob’s use of persuade suggest? What does it mean “to partake of the goodness of God”? How do we partake, in other words, share in that goodness?

If Jacob is talking about something like being converted, how is this description apt?

What does it mean to “enter into his rest”? Jacob probably knows the phrase “his rest” from Isaiah 11:10. Does that scripture shed any light on what he means?

Verse 8: Jacob seems to say there are only two choices: we can “rebel against God” and “provoke him to anger,” or we can “believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world.” (Compare 2 Nephi 2.) Why are there only those two choices? What does it mean to believe in Christ? How do we “view his death”? How do we “suffer his cross”? How do we “bear the shame of the world”? How is viewing Christ’s death, suffering his
cross, and bearing the shame of the world the opposite of rebelling against God?

Verse 9: At this point in the Book of Mormon it’s been about fifty-five years since the Nephites landed in the New World. About how old would Nephi have been?

Why doesn’t Jacob tell us the name of the man anointed to be king?

Verse 10: What might it mean that Nephi has “wielded the sword of Laban” to defend his people? When might that have happened?

How do you imagine that Nephi “labored all his days for their welfare”?

Verses 13–14: What do these verses tell us about the designations Lamanite and Nephite in the Book of Mormon? Are they political divisions? Are these divisions always used in the same way throughout the Book of Mormon? What does this description of these divisions show us about how we are to understand the terms?

Verses 15–16: What does Jacob imply when he says that the Nephites began to “indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices” (verse 15)? Does Jacob 2:5 throw any light on this?

What does this verse tell us about the polygamy of David and Solomon?

In verse 16, Jacob gives two additional reasons for his sermon. Do you see anything in these verses that applies to us?

Verse 17–18: Why do you think Jacob taught them in the temple? Why does he describe his calling and consecration
as a priest and teacher as an “errand from the Lord”? What does it mean to be consecrated a priest?

**Verse 19:** What does it mean to magnify an office? Perhaps seeing how the word *magnify* is used in the scriptures will help us understand. The KJV translation of the Old Testament uses *magnify* thirty-four times in several ways: it speaks of magnifying the Lord’s name (e.g., 2 Samuel 7:26); it speaks of the Lord magnifying one of his servants (e.g., 2 Chronicles 1:1); and it speaks of those who magnify themselves against the Lord (e.g., Psalm 55:12). As far as I can tell, however, it never speaks of magnifying an office. (The closest it comes is in 2 Chronicles 31:18, where it says the priest sanctified themselves in their office.)

The KJV translation of the New Testament uses *magnify* six times, in five cases as the Old Testament does. In Romans 11:13, however, Paul speaks of magnifying his office. Here *magnify* can also be translated “praise” or “honor.” When used to refer to the resurrection, the Greek verb that Paul uses here means “to clothe in splendor.” The noun form of the word means “glory” and refers specifically to God’s glory.

The Book of Mormon uses the term *magnify* only five times, three times as the Old Testament does and twice in terms of magnifying one’s office. (Every use occurs before the coming of Christ.) Jacob is the only Book of Mormon writer to use *magnify* in connection with magnifying one’s office (Jacob 1:19 and 2:2). However, the Doctrine and Covenants differs from the other scriptures in that it uses *magnify* only in connection with magnifying one’s office.

What do you make of those differences in usage?
Verse 4: When Jacob says “as yet, ye have been obedient unto the word of the Lord,” does that contradict what he said in verses 15–16 of chapter 1 or what he says in verse 5 of this chapter?

Verse 5: Why do you think he describes the Lord as “the all-powerful Creator of heaven and earth”? What does that description of the Lord emphasize? How is that emphasis appropriate to the circumstances in which he is preaching? What does it mean to “labor in sin”? Does anything in this verse help us understand why Jacob used somewhat in talking about their sins (Jacob 1:15–16)?

Verses 6–10: What bothers Jacob about what he is going to say? Why does he shrink with shame (verse 6) when he seems not to have done anything wrong, and why should his soul be burdened (verse 9)? What does Jacob think is the usual purpose of preaching the word of God (verse 8)? Considering the circumstances, what might these verses tell us about calling people to repentance? What does verse 10 tell us about Jacob’s understanding of his task?

Verse 13: What does Jacob point to as the problem of riches? How do we avoid that problem?

Verse 16–17: What is pride of the heart (verse 16)? Is it a different kind of pride, or is this just another way to speak of what we usually describe as pride? How does listening to the Lord’s commands keep us from pride? How does pride destroy our souls?
What does it mean to think of our brothers and sisters like ourselves (verse 17)? What does it mean to be familiar with all? Can you think of specific ways in which you can do this?

What does the word *substance* mean literally? In this usage, what does it mean? Given the meaning of the word *substance*, what does it mean to be free with it? How are we already rich? In what specific ways can we make others rich like ourselves?

**Verses 18–19:** How do we seek the kingdom of God?

What does it mean to “obtain a hope in Christ”? How do we obtain that hope?

If we can’t answer those questions, Jacob seems to say, we have no business seeking riches.

Notice what Jacob says: (1) After we obtain a hope in Christ, we will obtain riches if we seek them. (2) If we seek riches after we have obtained a hope in Christ, then we will do so in order to do good. He doesn’t say *we should* do so to do good. Why not? Does Deuteronomy 8:18 help us understand better what Jacob is teaching?

**Verses 20–21:** Jacob doesn’t just say that pride is bad; he says it is an abomination. Why?

Notice that he brings in the description of God as Creator again, as in verse 5. How is that relevant to his message? Why does Jacob say we were created?

**Verses 24–30:** How do these verses apply to us?

Why did Jacob deliver this part of the message second, and the part about pride and seeking for riches first?
Verses 31–34: What has prompted the message Jacob is giving? How do we cause the daughters of Zion to mourn and have sorrow today? In verse 32, is the term men being used generically, or does it refer to male human beings?

Verse 35: Why is what the Nephites have done worse than what the Lamanites did? (What did the Lamanites do?) As you think about this question, remember how Jacob tells us that he distinguishes Lamanites from Nephites (Jacob 1:13–14).

Jacob 3

Verse 1: Has Jacob saved “the word which healeth the wounded soul” (Jacob 2:8) for now?
What does it mean to be pure in heart?

Verse 2: What does it mean to lift up our heads?
What does it mean to “receive the pleasing word of God”?
What does it mean to “feast upon his love”? How is that related to feasting on the word (2 Nephi 31:20; 32:3)?
What does it mean to have our minds firm?

Verse 3–8: How might these verses apply to us? What do they teach us about chastity?
Why are the Lamanites better off than the Nephites?
What might verse 7 tell us about our own situation? What does Jacob mean when he says “their skins will be whiter than yours, when ye shall be brought with them before the throne of God” (verse 8)? Why does he fear that will be true?
Does this verse tell us that a white skin indicates righteousness? How do we make sense of this verse without inferring that Jacob condones racism?

**Verse 9:** Why did the Nephites look down on the Lamanites? Why was that wrong? What does Jacob say they should do instead? When he commands them to “remember your own filthiness, and remember that their filthiness came because of their fathers,” what is he saying about the origin of the Nephites’ filthiness? Isn’t he telling them something that today we believe would be harmful, telling them to think badly of themselves?

**Verse 10:** What consequence of their sins does Jacob warn them of? How does that apply to us?

**Jacob 4**

**Verses 1–3:** Why does Jacob tell us of the difficulty of writing on the plates and that the Book of Mormon writers can write only a little?

Who are the “beloved brethren” to whom Jacob refers in verse 3?

How does he want us to think of those whom he writes about?

**Verse 4–5:** Once again we are told the purpose of the Book of Mormon. Why is it important for us to know that the Nephites and the prophets before them knew of Christ?

Why do the Nephites keep the law of Moses? What does it mean to say that the law points our souls to God? We are no long required to keep the law of Moses, but does our
law also point our souls to God? If the law points us toward God, what gets us to him?

**Verse 6:** How does this verse answer the questions I asked about in verses 4–5? How did Jacob and those like him get the faith that he describes here?

**Verse 7:** Why is it important that his listeners remember their weaknesses? What might that say to us about our weaknesses and problems?

**Verses 8–9:** This seems to be a short psalm of praise. What is its point, and how does it fit in with the discussion that came before? How does it lead into the following discussion?

**Verse 10:** How do we try to counsel the Lord? How do we take counsel from him?

This verse begins with “Wherefore . . . ,” indicating that it follows from the previous verses. How is that so?

**Verse 11:** Does this verse answer the question asked earlier about obtaining a hope in Christ (Jacob 2:18–29)?

What does it mean to be reconciled through the Atonement? How do we do that?

What does it mean to be presented as the “first-fruits”?

**Verse 12:** What is Jacob’s point here? What possible objection is he replying to?

**Verse 13:** Why is this advice or explanation about prophecy appropriate here as part of his explanation of the gospel?

**Verses 14–17:** Of what is Jacob warning the Nephites? How can we apply this warning to ourselves?