
Jacob 1 — The Plates Pass to Jacob — Magnifying the Office, the Anxiety for Souls, the Naming of Kings

Fifty-five years from Lehi's departure; Nephi anoints a king; Jacob and Joseph consecrated priests, c. 544 BC.

The chapter is the BoM's first transition-of-prophetic-stewardship. Nephi, fifty-five years from leaving Jerusalem, hands the small plates to his younger brother Jacob. Four movements: (1) Nephi's commandment to Jacob (vv. 1–4); (2) the broader history Jacob declines to record (vv. 5–8); (3) the anointing of a king and the naming of kings (vv. 9–14); (4) the moral-state and Jacob's commission to magnify his office (vv. 15–19). Theological center is v. 19's *magnify our office... answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence* — pre-Ezekielian watchman-blood-responsibility.

Ten Insights

- 1. Fifty-five years from Lehi's departure (v. 1).** *Fifty and five years had passed away from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem.* The BoM's-chronology consistently dated from Lehi-departure, not from any secular-reference. ~545 BC; transition to first-person-Jacob-voice.
- 2. Small-plate criterion — engrave the rosh-ha-davar (v. 4).** *If there were preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying, that I should engraven the heads of them upon these plates... for Christ's sake.* Christological-editorial-criterion (cf. Jn. 20:31).
- 3. Faith and great anxiety (v. 5).** *Because of faith and great anxiety, it truly had been made manifest unto us concerning our people.* The prophet's-master-temperament — faith-paired-with-anxiety for the people's-salvation (2 Cor. 11:28).
- 4. We knew of Christ and his kingdom (v. 6).** *We had many revelations, and the spirit of much prophecy; wherefore, we knew of Christ and his kingdom, which should come.* Pre-Christian Christ-knowledge by revelation, not by tradition or scripture alone.
- 5. Persuade them to enter into his rest (v. 7).** *We labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ... 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.* Pre-Hebrews citation of Ps. 95:8–11 (Heb. 3:7–4:11).
- 6. View his death, suffer his cross, bear the shame (v. 8).** *Persuade all men not to rebel against God... but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world.* Pre-Markan articulation of Mk. 8:34's take-up-the-cross. Six centuries before Christ's literal cross.
- 7. Nephi-as-royal-title (vv. 10–11).** *And whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people, second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth.* Nephi becomes a royal-title like Pharaoh, Caesar, Augustus, Czar. People retain his name in remembrance (cf. Mosiah 25:13).
- 8. Seven-clan confederation (v. 13).** *Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites.* Binary-Nephite/Lamanite-grammar is political-religious-binary, not tribal-purity-binary. Zoram-the-outsider sits at the center of the clan-list.
- 9. Errand from the Lord, given in the temple (v. 17).** *I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord.* Temple-as-pulpit; *shelichut* + *mikdash* — errand obtained at the sanctuary (Acts 22:17–21 in pre-Christian form).
- 10. Magnify our office; blood on our garments (v. 19).** *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.* Pre-Ezekielian watchman-blood-responsibility (Ezek. 3:17–21; 33:1–9; Acts 20:26–27).

Cross-References

Gen. 49 (Jacob's blessings); Ex. 18:13–26 (Moses' judges); Ex. 25:8 (let them make me a sanctuary); Num. 12:3 (Moses very meek); Num. 27:18–23 (Moses lays hands on Joshua — direct parallel v. 18); Deut. 8:11–14 (lest thy heart be lifted up — direct parallel v. 16); Deut. 17:14–20 (king-law); Deut. 31:7–8 (Moses commissions Joshua); Josh. 1:6–9 (be strong); Judg. 2:10 (another generation — direct parallel v. 15); 1 Sam. 3:19–20 (let none of his words fall to the ground); 1 Sam. 8:5 (make us a king — direct background v. 9); 2 Sam. 11–12 (David's polygamy — direct background v. 15); 1 Ki. 11:1–8 (Solomon's wives — direct background v. 15); Ps. 95:8–11 (rest — direct parallel v. 7); Isa. 6:8 (here am I, send me — direct parallel v. 17); Isa. 53:3 (despised — direct background v. 8); Jer. 1:7 (thou shalt go to all that I shall send); Ezek. 3:17–21 (watchman — direct parallel v. 19); Ezek. 33:1–9 (set him a watchman — direct parallel v. 19); Ezek. 34:1–10 (against the shepherds); Mal. 2:7 (priest's lips should keep knowledge); Matt. 13:52 (every scribe instructed unto the kingdom); Matt. 16:24 (take up thy cross — direct parallel v. 8); Mk. 8:34 (deny himself, take up cross — direct parallel v. 8); Lk. 9:23 (take up cross daily); Jn. 20:31 (these are written that ye might believe — direct parallel v. 4); Acts 20:26–27 (pure from the blood — direct parallel v. 19); Acts 20:31 (warned every one); Acts 22:17–21 (Paul's temple-commissioning — direct parallel v. 17); Rom. 1:14 (I am debtor); Rom. 9:1–3 (continual sorrow); 1 Cor. 9:16 (woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel); 2 Cor. 11:28 (care of all churches — direct parallel v. 5); Phil. 3:8–10 (fellowship of his sufferings); 1 Thes. 2:7–12 (gentle among you as a nurse); 2 Tim. 2:2 (commit thou to faithful men — direct parallel v. 3); 2 Tim. 4:1–2 (preach the word); Heb. 3:7–11 (provocation — direct parallel v. 7); Heb. 4:1–11 (rest of God — direct parallel v. 7); Heb. 12:1–2 (despising the shame — direct parallel v. 8); Heb. 13:13 (let us go forth without the camp); Heb. 13:17 (they watch for your souls); James 3:1 (be not many masters); 1 Pet. 5:2 (feed the flock of God); 1 Ne. 9 (small plates rationale); 2 Ne. 5:16 (Nephite temple); 2 Ne. 5:18 (people wanted king); 2 Ne. 5:26 (Jacob consecrated); 2 Ne. 31 (doctrine of Christ); 2 Ne. 33 (Nephi's farewell — direct context); Jacob 2 (Jacob's rebuke — direct sequel); Words of Mormon 1:3–7 (small-plate-discovery); Mosiah 25:13 (Nephites took upon themselves name of Nephi — direct parallel v. 11); Alma 13:9 (priests after the order of the Son of God); Alma 29:1 (O that I were an angel — direct parallel v. 8); D&C 18:10 (worth of souls); D&C 18:15 (one soul brought unto me); D&C 21:1 (record kept); D&C 50:13–14 (unto what were ye ordained); D&C 84:106 (idler shall not have place); D&C 88:81 (warn his neighbor); D&C 107:21–22 (priesthood quorum); Articles of Faith 5 (called of God by prophecy); Articles of Faith 6 (apostolic priesthood).

Apocryphal Correlations

Sirach 50:1–24 (Simeon). Magnifying the priestly office; entering the sanctuary — direct vv. 17–19 parallel.

Wisdom 9:13–18. Who can know the counsel of God — direct v. 17 errand-from-the-Lord parallel.

4 Ezra 14:23–48. Ezra commissioned to write 94 books — small-plate-criterion parallel.

2 Baruch 84:1–11. I have proclaimed a commandment — direct vv. 15–19 final-warning parallel.

1 Enoch 92:1–5. Enoch's instruction to his sons — generational-trust parallel to v. 3.

Tobit 12:6–10. Tobit's commission to his son — direct vv. 3–4 generational-trust parallel.

Damascus Doc (CD) 1:1–12. Heed the works of God; raised up a Teacher of Righteousness — direct vv. 17–19 parallel.

1QS 6:13–23. Examining conduct of those entering the covenant — direct vv. 15–17 parallel.

Hebrew Word Studies

chaqaq (חָקַק, **engrave, inscribe in stone**) — v. 4. The Sinai-tablet-verb (Ex. 32:16); small plates record by permanent engraving.

rosh ha-davar (רֹאשׁ הַדָּבָר, **head of the matter, essence**) — v. 4 (criterion). The rabbinic-noun for summary, capital, principal point.

dagah (דָּגָה, **anxiety, care**) — v. 5. The anxiety-noun underlying 2 Cor. 11:28's care of all the churches.

nasa tzelav (נָסָא צֶלָו, **take up the cross**) — v. 8. Hebraic-translation of NT's stauros-bearing; Heb. 13:13 grammar in pre-NT form.

shelichut (שְׁלִיחוּת, **errand, mission**) — v. 17. The noun underlying the NT apostolos (one-sent); errand-from-the-Lord.

mikdash (מִקְדָּשׁ, **holy-place, sanctuary, temple**) — vv. 17–18. Ex. 25:8's let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

Personal Application

Three practices. First, engrave the rosh-ha-davar; let the political-history go. In your own journal or record, prioritize spiritual-experience over event-chronicle; record what you would want your great-grandchildren to read (D&C 21:1). Second, view his death; suffer his cross; bear the shame. Meditate weekly on Gethsemane and Calvary; do not skip past the Friday to the Sunday; bear the busha of being-a-disciple-in-an-anti-disciple-age (Mk. 8:34; 2 Tim. 1:8). Third, magnify your office, whatever it is. Whatever office you hold — parent, teacher, ministering-brother-or-sister, husband, wife, neighbor — magnify it as if their blood is on your garments if you fail to teach with diligence (D&C 50:13–14).