
Jacob 4 — Looking Beyond the Mark — Jacob's Meditation on Christ, Scripture, and the Jewish Stumble

Jacob's editorial reflection; we knew of Christ; Abraham's offering as a similitude; the Jewish rejection foretold; c. 544 BC.

The chapter is the BoM's most-concentrated meditation on the prophetic-task itself — why we write, what we know, and how to read scripture. Four movements: (1) Jacob's editorial-purpose (vv. 1–4); (2) the Patriarchs' Christ-knowledge — Abraham's offering of Isaac as a similitude (vv. 5–7); (3) the unsearchable greatness of God (vv. 8–13); (4) the Jewish rejection foretold — they looked beyond the mark (vv. 14–18). Center: vv. 13–14 — the Spirit speaks of things *as they really are and as they really will be* vs. the Jewish stumble from *looking beyond the mark*.

Ten Insights

- 1. We knew of Christ many hundred years before (v. 4).** *They may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming.* The BoM's-master-purpose — latter-day-demonstration of pre-Christian-Christ-knowledge (Lk. 24:27; Heb. 11:13).
- 2. Law of Moses points our souls to him (v. 5).** *We keep the law of Moses, it pointing our souls to him; and for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness.* Pre-Pauline articulation of Gal. 3:24's law-as-schoolmaster-to-bring-us-to-Christ.
- 3. Abraham's offering of Isaac as similitude (v. 5).** *Even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son.* Pre-Johannine articulation of Jn. 3:16 — for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.
- 4. Trees and mountains obey unshaken faith (v. 6).** *Our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.* Pre-Christ articulation of Matt. 17:20's faith-as-a-grain-of-mustard-seed-removes-mountains.
- 5. Weakness shows grace (v. 7).** *The Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men.* Pre-Pauline articulation of 2 Cor. 12:9 — my strength is made perfect in weakness.
- 6. Unsearchable mysteries (v. 8).** *Great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways.* Pre-Pauline articulation of Rom. 11:33 — O the depth of the riches.
- 7. Take counsel from his hand; do not counsel (v. 10).** *Seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand.* The disciple's-posture is petitionary, not advisory (Isa. 40:13; Rom. 11:34).
- 8. Be reconciled through the atonement (v. 11).** *Be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ... and ye may obtain a resurrection... and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ.* Pre-Pauline articulation of 2 Cor. 5:18–20.
- 9. Spirit speaks things as they really are (v. 13).** *The Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be.* Pre-Restoration articulation of D&C 93:24's three-tense-truth definition. The chapter's ontological-truth verse.
- 10. Looking beyond the mark (v. 14).** *Their blindness came by looking beyond the mark.* The BoM's-master-editorial-coinage. The Jewish-stumble is self-chosen-overshooting of the central-Christological-target (Rom. 11:7–10). All scripture witnesses Christ; the disciple's reading-task is to keep the eye on the mark.

Cross-References

Gen. 22:1–14 (Akedah — direct parallel v. 5); Gen. 49:10 (Shiloh); Ex. 34:6 (abundant in truth — direct background v. 13); Lev. 16 (Day of Atonement); Num. 21:8–9 (brazen serpent typology); Deut. 18:15 (a prophet like Moses); Job 11:7 (canst thou by searching find out God — direct parallel v. 8); Ps. 11:2 (the wicked bend their bow — direct background v. 14); Ps. 25:4–5 (shew me thy ways); Ps. 33:6 (by the word of the Lord — direct parallel v. 9); Ps. 118:22 (stone which the builders refused — direct parallel v. 15); Prov. 3:5–6 (lean not unto thine own understanding — direct parallel v. 10); Prov. 25:2 (glory of God to conceal a thing); Isa. 5:1–7 (vineyard parable — direct background ch. 5 sequel); Isa. 8:14 (stone of stumbling — direct parallel v. 15); Isa. 28:16 (foundation a stone — direct parallel v. 16); Isa. 40:13 (who hath directed the Spirit — direct parallel v. 10); Isa. 53 (Suffering Servant); Isa. 55:8–9 (my thoughts are not your thoughts — direct parallel v. 8); Hos. 6:3 (let us follow on to know the Lord — direct background v. 4); Matt. 5:17 (I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil — direct parallel v. 5); Matt. 13:11 (mysteries of the kingdom); Matt. 17:20 (faith as mustard seed — direct parallel v. 6); Matt. 21:42 (head of the corner — direct parallel v. 15); Mk. 11:23 (whosoever shall say unto this mountain — direct parallel v. 6); Lk. 24:27 (Emmaus exposition — direct parallel v. 4); Jn. 1:3 (all things were made by him — direct parallel v. 9); Jn. 3:16 (only begotten Son — direct parallel v. 5); Jn. 5:39 (search the scriptures — they testify of me — direct parallel v. 6); Jn. 5:46 (had ye believed Moses); Jn. 8:56 (Abraham rejoiced to see my day — direct parallel v. 5); Jn. 14:6 (way, truth, life — direct parallel v. 13); Jn. 16:13 (Spirit of truth — direct parallel v. 13); Acts 3:18–25 (all the prophets — direct parallel v. 4); Acts 4:11 (stone set at nought of you builders — direct parallel v. 15); Rom. 1:18–20 (without excuse); Rom. 8:32 (spared not his own Son — direct parallel v. 5); Rom. 9:30–33 (stumblingstone — direct parallel vv. 14–15); Rom. 11:7–10 (blindness in part — direct parallel v. 14); Rom. 11:33–36 (O the depth of the riches — direct parallel v. 8); 1 Cor. 1:18–23 (preaching of the cross is foolishness); 1 Cor. 2:7–10 (mystery of God); 1 Cor. 3:11 (foundation — direct parallel v. 16); 1 Cor. 9:27 (lest I myself should be a castaway — direct parallel v. 18); 1 Cor. 13:12 (now we see through a glass darkly); 1 Cor. 15:23 (Christ the firstfruits — direct parallel v. 11); 2 Cor. 5:18–20 (be reconciled — direct parallel v. 11); 2 Cor. 12:9 (strength in weakness — direct parallel v. 7); Gal. 3:7–9 (children of Abraham); Gal. 3:24 (law as schoolmaster — direct parallel v. 5); Eph. 2:20 (built upon the foundation — direct parallel v. 16); Phil. 3:8 (knowledge of Christ — direct parallel v. 12); Heb. 4:12 (word is quick); Heb. 7:22 (better testament); Heb. 8:5 (shadow of heavenly things); Heb. 10:1 (law having a shadow); Heb. 11:1 (faith is substance); Heb. 11:13 (these all died in faith — direct parallel v. 4); Heb. 11:17–19 (Abraham offered Isaac — direct parallel v. 5); 1 Pet. 1:10–12 (prophets searched diligently — direct parallel v. 4); 1 Pet. 2:6–8 (stone laid in Sion — direct parallel v. 15); Rev. 13:8 (Lamb slain from foundation of world); 1 Ne. 10:7–10 (John foreseen); 1 Ne. 11 (condescension of God); 1 Ne. 19:23 (liken all scriptures); 2 Ne. 11:4 (typifying of him); 2 Ne. 25:23 (saved by grace); 2 Ne. 25:24–27 (law of Moses + Christ); Jacob 1 (Jacob's commission); Jacob 2 (Jacob's rebuke); Jacob 3 (Lamanite contrast); Jacob 5 (allegory of the olive tree — direct sequel-resolution v. 17); Mosiah 13:27–33 (salvation comes by Christ alone); Alma 25:15–16 (looking forward to Christ); Alma 30:3 (kept the law of Moses); Alma 34:14 (great and last sacrifice); Hel. 5:12 (rock of Redeemer — direct parallel v. 16); 3 Ne. 9:17 (in me is the law of Moses fulfilled); 3 Ne. 11:39–40 (foundation); 3 Ne. 15:5 (law of Moses is fulfilled); Eth. 4:14–15 (rend the veil of unbelief — direct parallel v. 8); Eth. 12:27 (weakness — direct parallel v. 7); D&C 6:14 (illuminated by Holy Spirit); D&C 50:22–24 (Spirit-truth of things as they are); D&C 76:114–119 (eye hath not seen — direct parallel v. 8); D&C 88:118 (study and faith); D&C 93:24 (truth — direct parallel v. 13); D&C 121:26–33 (mysteries); Moses 5:8 (in name of Son thou shalt do all — direct parallel v. 5); Articles of Faith 9 (continuous revelation); Articles of Faith 13 (seek after these things).

Apocryphal Correlations

Sirach 24:1–22 (Wisdom personified). Wisdom dwells with the people; Christological-pre-figuration — direct vv. 4, 12 parallel.

Wisdom 7:25–8:1. Wisdom is the breath of God's power — direct vv. 8–9 unsearchable-greatness parallel.

Wisdom 9:16–17. Hardly do we guess aright — direct v. 8 unsearchable parallel.

4 Ezra 4:1–11. If thou canst weigh the fire, or measure the wind — direct v. 8 unsearchable parallel.

2 Baruch 75:1–8. Who can investigate his unsearchable counsel — direct vv. 8–10 parallel.

Testament of Levi 18:2–14. A new priest will be raised up — direct vv. 11, 16 messianic-foundation parallel.

4 Maccabees 13:9–18. Seven brothers' Akedah-typology — direct v. 5 Isaac-offering parallel.

Damascus Doc (CD) 5:6–8. They built their teachings on a foundation that would not bear — direct vv. 14–15 stumbling parallel.

Hebrew Word Studies

yedi'at Mashiach (יְדִיעוּת מָשִׁיחַ, *knowledge of the Messiah*) — v. 4. Hos. 6:3 — let us follow on to know the Lord. The goal of all prophetic-ministry.

tikvat kavod (תִּקְוַת כְּבוֹד, **hope of glory**) — v. 4. Col. 1:27 — Christ in you, the hope of glory.

akedah (עֲקֵדָה, **binding [of Isaac]**) — v. 5. The rabbinic-noun for Gen. 22's binding of Isaac; Calvary-typology.

emet (אֱמֶת, **truth, faithfulness**) — v. 13. The noun of God's-character (Ex. 34:6); ontological-not-just-propositional.

kemo she-hu (כְּמוֹ שֶׁהוּא, **as it is**) — v. 13. Hebrew copular-grammar of present-being; the Spirit speaks reality.

tzaddai (צַדִּיק, **to shoot at a target — implied**) — v. 14 (looking beyond the mark). The archery-metaphor of overshooting the center.

Personal Application

Three practices. First, read every verse for the mark. When you read scripture, ask of each passage — how does this witness Christ?; do not bypass the central-Christological-mark for peripheral-curiosity (Lk. 24:27). Second, take counsel from his hand; do not counsel. When you pray, ask for counsel; do not lecture; do not instruct God on the solution; receive (Ps. 25:4–5). Third, attain to a perfect knowledge of Christ. Make Christological-knowledge the lifelong-aim; let every other knowledge serve this knowledge (Phil. 3:8).