



3 Nephi 27.³⁰⁻³²— Meditation

³⁰And now, behold, my joy is great, even unto fulness, because of you, and also this generation; yea, and even the Father rejoiceth, and also all the holy angels, because of you and this generation; for none of them are lost. ³¹Behold, I would that ye should understand; for I mean them who are now alive of this generation; and none of them are lost; and in them I have fulness of joy.

³²But behold, it sorroweth me because of the fourth generation from this generation, for they are led away captive by him even as was the son of perdition; for they will sell me for silver and for gold, and for that which moth doth corrupt and which thieves can break through and steal. And in that day will I visit them, even in turning their works upon their own heads.

We are all certainly heartened when we read Jesus confess, “my joy is great, even unto fulness, *because of you, and also this generation*; yea, and even the Father rejoiceth, and also all the holy angels...” How bright and wonderful this expression is! How amazing to think that a puny human, who, even “at his best state is altogether vanity” (Ps. 49.⁵), or a nation that is to God “as a drop of a bucket” and is “counted as the small dust of the balance” (Is. 40.¹⁵), can gladden the heart of an infinitely happy God.

As we contemplate this wonder, it is likely that we all also hope that the same might be said of us; that Jesus is pleased with and because of us. We might wish to simply stop reading, stay put, and bask in the glow of the Savior’s joy. It is good news indeed.

But the text allows no such repose. Sorrow immediately intrudes into our happy thoughts and invades the Savior’s present joy. We hate to see that “but.” But, there is no escaping it. “*But,*” laments the Savior, “behold, it sorroweth me because of the fourth generation from this generation.” And we all wonder, or should, “What is it about this ‘fourth generation’ that brings such sorrow to the heart of God?” We might begin to make a list in our minds of the potential sin and wickedness that could turn God’s heart dark with sorrow.

The woman on T.V. asks, “What’s in your wallet?” Here, we ask, What’s on your list?”

Here’s what’s on Jesus’ list.

- Silver
- Gold
- Stuff moths can eat
- Stuff thieves can steal

Translation: MATERIALISM.

Lest we imagine that we are seeing things that aren’t there; that this can’t be the reason for the fourth generation’s collapse or the cause of Jesus’ sorrow...

“And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world. And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them. And they began to be divided into classes; and they began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain, and began to deny the true church of Christ.”¹

The beginning of the end. The gateway to perdition.

Yes, we might be surprised at how short Jesus’ list is. We might be surprised at the items found on it. We were, perhaps, expecting something far worse. Witnessing the near total absence of warnings about the sorrow this list brings God, one would think the items on the list were mere trifling offences. Given the honor that is heaped upon those most skilled in financial acquisition, one might even come to think of it as good; something godly.

But, materialism is not godly. Nowhere near. It is not a trifling matter. It is no small sin. It is huge, Gigantic. It hardly gets worse. It is the foundation, or root, of all evil.² As Jesus warns his disciples here, materialism is like slavery. Materialism ushers in a day of visitation. Materialism comes down on the head of its practitioners like a ton of bricks. Worst still— and perhaps most shocking to all too many—it is related, brother and sister to, perdition.

Given the world in which we live, this is not good news. It is extraordinarily bad news. Our society is awash in materialism. Flooding in its deluge. But there is good news. There is a fix. God, in his mercy, provides the economic fix to the perdition problem materialism presents. It is best articulated in, roughly, the middle third of the Doctrine and Covenants: say, Sections 37-82. Now, how’s that for promotion? Go ahead. Have a look. See what you find there. It isn’t an easy fix, as history, even our own LDS history, demonstrates. But it’s a fix. And, surely, it’s better than perdition.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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¹ 4 Nephi 1.²⁴⁻²⁶

² See 1 Timothy 6.¹⁰