

Jacob 1.⁸

Wherefore, we would to God that we could persuade all men not to rebel against God, to provoke him to anger, but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world...

Though I had probably read it dozens of times, I was in my early thirties when I really read, really heard, and then faithfully acted upon the profound admonition that Nephi's little brother, Jacob, extended to his hearers: "View his death."

There is no doubt that for many readers of the Book of Mormon, Jacob, the brother of Nephi lives in the shadow of his more famous brother. Yet, Nephi thinks highly of his younger brother and his gospel insights. Even in the second book that bears Nephi's name, five chapters are devoted to Jacob's teachings and instruction.¹ In fact, Jacob's inspired teachings with their high dependence upon and use of Isaiah seem to have inspired Nephi to include fifteen chapters from Isaiah in his own work.

Nephi, confessing that he, like Isaiah, had seen "my Redeemer," also informs us, "my brother, Jacob, also has seen him as I have seen him."² We cannot say for sure what either of these men saw, however, perhaps Jacob's admonition provides a clue.

In the first chapter of his book, Jacob tells us about his constant admonition of his people. He admonished them "to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God." He admonished them "not to rebel against God, to provoke him to anger." He admonished them to "suffer his [Jesus'] cross and bear the shame of the world." Tucked in with these admonitions, is this one: Jacob admonished his people to "view his [Christ's] death."

Think about this final admonition. Think about the importance of the event—of Jesus' death by crucifixion—that Jacob would admonish his people to view it.

In April of 1829 as Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were starting their project of translating the Book of Mormon, they received their own admonition. It is a personal invitation from the Lord Jesus himself: "Behold the wounds which pierced my side, and also the prints of the nails in my hands and feet."³ This admonition is not unlike that that Jacob delivered.

As Lent ends and we enter the commemoration of the Savior's final week—Holy Week, as it is called in Christendom—Jacob's admonition to his listeners and the Savior's own invitation to Joseph and Oliver seem especially pertinent. It is the time of times to do more than *remember*, but to labor to *view* with an eye of faith Jesus's final week, his death on the cross, and "the wounds which pierced [his] side," and "the prints of the nails in [his] hands and feet."

Such viewing is not sensationalist. It is not grotesque or macabre. It is saving and redeeming; for, as Paul bears witness, "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."⁴ So, go ahead. Close your eyes. And let the past become present.

¹ 2 Nephi 6-10

² See 2 Ne. 11.²⁻³

³ See DC 6.^{34 & 37}

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1.¹⁸

Step up and stand at the foot of the cross. Look upon his battered body. Marvel at his unconquerable spirit. And *view his death*.

It may be that of all our admonitions over the course of this Lent season, this three-word admonition is the most important and transformative of them all. And not only are they of the utmost importance for Lent and Easter. They are of the utmost importance for every time.

View his death.

You will not regret the effort. I, for one, have never viewed anything more magnificent. So, go ahead. *View his death!*

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

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