

**LESSON 13**  
**“The Allegory of the Olive Tree”**  
**Jacob 5-7**

**OVERVIEW:**

Jacob quotes Zenos’s allegory of the olive trees. Jacob exhorts his listeners to repent and follow Christ. Sherem’s false teachings.

By way of introduction, the allegory must be divided into three main sections. Section 1 is described by verses 1-14. Section 2 is described by verses 15-28. And section 3 is described by verses 29-75. Each of these sections is divided by the passage of a long time period, see verses 15 and 29. Therefore, there are three main visits of the Lord and his servants to the vineyard. Each visit is separated by the passage of a lot of time. Keep this in mind as you read for the chronology of the allegory is important and will help us with the correct interpretation. Another help is to understand what the figures in the allegory represent. The Book of Mormon Institute Manual gives a key:

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>INTERPRETATION</b>
<b>1. The vineyard</b>	<b>1. The world</b>
<b>2. Master of the vineyard</b>	<b>2. Jesus Christ</b>
<b>3. The servant</b>	<b>3. The Lord’s prophets</b>
<b>4. Tame olive tree</b>	<b>4. The house of Israel, the Lord’s covenant people</b>
<b>5. Wild olive tree</b>	<b>5. Gentiles</b>
<b>6. Branches</b>	<b>6. Groups of people</b>
<b>7. The roots of the tame olive tree</b>	<b>7. The gospel covenant and promises made by God that constantly give life and sustenance to the tree</b>
<b>8. Fruit of the tree</b>	<b>8. The lives or works of men</b>
<b>9. Digging, pruning, fertilizing</b>	<b>9. The Lord’s work with his children which seeks to persuade them to be obedient and produce good fruit</b>
<b>10. Transplanting the branches</b>	<b>10. Scattering of groups throughout the world or restoring them to their original position</b>
<b>11. Grafting</b>	<b>11. The process of spiritual rebirth wherein one is joined to the covenant</b>
<b>12. Decaying branches</b>	<b>12. Wickedness and apostasy</b>
<b>13. Casting the branches into the fire</b>	<b>13. The judgment of God</b>

One of the basic things to understand about the allegory is that there are five time periods talked about and four different groups, or geographic locations of people. This is where marking the scriptures will be helpful. A simple way to identify the time periods is just with the letters A, B, C, D, and E. A simple way to identify the various groups or branches of Israel is with the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. Let us first identify the groups of people and where they were led geographically, by description from the allegory, and then we will mark the scriptures together so this allegory will become more understandable.

**Group 1.** A tame olive tree in the land of Israel. This geographical area is easy to identify as ancient Israel, or the land of Palestine located in and around Jerusalem, the holy city.

**Group 2.** The poorest spot of ground in the vineyard. Not easily identifiable as to where it is. It is far afield from Israel. Could be the British Isles. Could be a general category referring to a certain type of area where this branch was taken.

**Group 3.** A poorer spot of ground even than group 2. Not easily identifiable as to where it is. It, too, is far afield from Israel. Could be the "north countries" where the ten tribes were led around 721 B.C. Could be a general category of land where the scattered tribes were scattered, a barren land without the covenants and blessings of the Lord.

**Group 4.** A good spot of ground, even choice above all other parts of the land of the vineyard. This land, too, is greatly separated, geographically, from the mother tree, or the land of Israel. This land is where the children of Lehi were led. It is the land of the Nephites and the Lamanites. It is likely not only Central America, but the continents of North and South America. Next to the land of Israel, this is the easiest location to identify.

The time periods are as follows:

**Period A.** This is the earliest time when the covenants of Israel were put forth and includes some of the time of major scattering of the tribes of Israel. Some scholars feel that this could be tied from the time of Adam and the patriarchs down to the time of Abraham. Although this is possible, it is not likely. It probably dates from the time of Abraham, about 2000 B.C. until the times of scattering, 721-600 B.C.

**Period B.** This is a long time after the first period (Jacob 5:15) The scattering has taken place and the tribes are to be found around the mother tree and in at least three other areas around the vineyard. It appears that this time period is likely from about 721-600 B.C. until about 90 B.C. or thereabouts. The key to understanding this time period is where the good fruits are being found, specifically with Group 4, the Nephites and the Lamanites. (See Jacob 5:25) And since the Lamanite converts did not begin until after about 92 B.C. with the mission of the four sons of Mosiah, it has to take place before this time.

**Period C.** This is a long period of time after Period B. The allegory says that "the time draweth near, and the end soon cometh..." (See Jacob 5:29). This time period includes the time of the coming of Christ, the destructions of Jerusalem around A.D. 68-70, the destruction of the Nephites, approximately A.D. 385 (see Jacob 5: 45) and includes a major portion of time into the dark ages, or the time of apostasy, perhaps even up until the end of the eighteenth century or beginning of the nineteenth century (late 1700's or early 1800's).

**Period D.** This is the last time that the vineyard is pruned and the harvest is brought in. It is the Dispensation of the Fullness of times. It is the period which includes the Restoration of all the keys and up until the time of the Second Coming. It includes from at least 1820 until the end of this dispensation. It is a time period that is the shortest of all the time periods. It is a time of gathering, where the covenants of Israel are re-established in the land of Israel. Again, it is the last time (see Jacob 5:62).

**Period E.** This is the Millennial Reign of the Lord. It is a thousand year period beginning just before the Second Coming of the Lord. No man knows the date of this time period. The signs of the times seem to point to a season, potentially in the foreseeable future.

The following is a scripture-marking exercise, though not meant to be comprehensive, it will help put all of these things in place. First let's mark the time periods in the margins next to the verses pertaining to those periods. You may want to draw a line marking each section of verses. You may want to color code those sections with a different colored line. You may want to just write in the verses that the time period covers, like "Time Period A: verses 4-14."

Time Period A begins with Jacob 5:4 and goes through verse 14.

Time Period B begins with Jacob 5:15 and goes through verse 28.

Time Period C begins with Jacob 5:29 and goes approximately through verse 49.

Time Period D begins with Jacob 5:50 and goes approximately through verse 73.

Time Period E begins likely with Jacob 5:74 and goes to the end of the chapter (77).

The following is a scripture-marking exercise that will help you identify the geographical locations and/or groups of people as identified above. Again, this is not meant to be comprehensive. You can place the letters next to the verses and this will help you keep them clear in your mind for future readings.

Group 1 can be marked next to the following verses in Jacob chapter 5: 16-19; 30-37; 52, 53.

Group 2 can be marked next to the following verses: 20-22; 39.

Group 3 can be marked next to the following verses: 23; 39.

Group 4 can be marked next to the following verses: 24-27; 39-46. It is noteworthy that Zenos spent a lot of time and detail on this last group which was his own posterity, the children of Lehi.

It is interesting to note verse 44 is a clear reference to the destruction of the Jaredites before the Nephites and Lamanites spread forth upon the land. Scot Facer Proctor, Meridian Magazine, Lesson 13.

Joseph Fielding Smith said: "But we have something in the Book of Mormon that, if we did not have other truth expressed in it, would be sufficient evidence of the divinity of this book. I have reference to the fifth chapter of Jacob...I think that as many as ninety-nine out of every hundred who read the Book of Mormon, read this parable through without grasping the fullness and meaning of it. And I think this is one of the greatest passages in the Book of Mormon...No matter how many times you have read the Book of Mormon,...take a few minutes at some convenient time and sit down and just read carefully every word in the fifth chapter of the Book of Jacob...No greater parable was ever recorded...I tell you, my brothers and sisters, Joseph Smith did not write it. That was written by the inspiration of the Almighty...When you read that chapter through if you cannot say in your soul, 'this is absolutely a revelation from God,' then there is something wrong with you." (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 4, p. 203-7 as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 183-4)

(Won't it be interesting, that when we have the brass plates translated for us, we will see that this complicated chapter in Jacob came directly from those plates. Joseph Smith could only have translated this by the power of God.)

## SCRIPTURES:

### THE BOOK OF JACOB THE BROTHER OF NEPHI

#### CHAPTER 5

*Jacob quotes Zenos relative to the allegory of the tame and wild olive trees—They are a likeness of Israel and the gentiles—The scattering and gathering of Israel are prefigured—Allusions are made to the Nephites and Lamanites and all the house of Israel—Gentiles shall be grafted into Israel—Eventually the vineyard shall be burned. [Between 544 and 421 B.C.]* (The allegory of Zenos is a prophecy of cosmic scope, an oracle without peer. It is of itself more than an adequate response to the allegation that the Book of Mormon is the work of a farm boy turned theologian. Its complexity combined with its consistency bears eloquent witness that the Book of Mormon came through Joseph Smith, not from him. DCBM, 2:48. The purpose of the allegory is to show us how kind the Lord is in extending every effort to have us come to Him.)

1 BEHOLD, my brethren, do ye not remember to have read (The allegory is not something new to the Nephites: Jacob is here reminding his people of writings with which they were already familiar. DCBM, 2:48) the words of the prophet <sup>a</sup>Zenos, (It would appear that Zenos was one of the prophets whose oracles were recorded on the brass plates. He would have lived some time before Lehi, probably in the northern tribes of Israel before the Assyrian captivity of the Ten Tribes. Elder McConkie said: “I do not think I overstate the matter when I say that next to Isaiah himself – who is the prototype, pattern, and model for all the prophets – there was not a greater prophet in all Israel than Zenos. *The JST: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things*, p. 17. We properly make a distinction between “a prophet” and “the prophet”. In our day we testify of many who are prophets while normally reserving the phrase “the Prophet” for Joseph Smith, who stands at the head of our dispensation. Zenos was of such greatness that he is properly referred to as “the prophet.” DCBM, 2:48.) which he spake unto the house of Israel, saying:

2 Hearken, O ye house of Israel, and hear the words of me, a prophet of the Lord. (There is what might be called the “doctrine of ambiguity”. On some matters God has simply not spoken, has not given a complete understanding to the people of the Church; on many matters a full or final interpretation of the prophetic word is yet to come. This would certainly be the case in regard to the allegory of Zenos. There are definite themes or underlying messages – broad and clear statements which are readily discernible; there is also a host of historical or doctrinal particulars about which we might speculate or conjecture but for which a definite and clear interpretation has not been made known by living Apostles or prophets. DCBM, 2:47)

3 For behold, thus saith the Lord, I will liken thee, O house of <sup>a</sup>Israel, (The allegory covers the time period from about 1700 BC, the founding of the house of Israel, to the end of the world.) like unto a tame <sup>b</sup>olive-tree, (A tame olive tree is one that is cultivated by the master of the vineyard, specifically grown to produce good olives. The olive tree is a carefully chosen simile for several reasons: “For centuries the olive branch has been associated with peace. When the dove returned to Noah in the ark, it carried in its beak an olive leaf, as though to symbolize that the earth was again at peace with God. (See Genesis 8:11) The olive branch was used in both Greece and Rome to signify peace, and it is still used in that sense in the great seal of the United States where the American eagle is shown grasping an olive branch in his talons... “There is further symbolic significance in that the olive tree is different from most other fruit-bearing trees in the manner of its beginning. If the green slip of an olive tree is merely planted and allowed to grow, it develops into the wild olive, a bush that grows without control into a tangle of limbs and branches that produce only a small, worthless fruit. (See Harold N. and Alma L. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible*, p. 159) To become the productive ‘tame’ olive tree, the main stem of the wild tree

must be cut back completely and then a branch from a tame olive tree must be grafted into the stem of the wild one. With careful pruning and cultivating the tree will begin to produce its first fruit in about seven years, but it will not become fully productive for nearly fifteen years. In other words, the olive tree cannot become productive in and of itself; it requires grafting by the husbandman to bring it into production. One remembers the figure used by Jesus to describe himself, his Father, and those that serve them: 'I am the true vine, and my father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.' (John 15:1-3) The word *purgeth* in Greek means 'pruned,' and in Greek verse 3 keeps the metaphor and says, 'Now ye are *pruned*.' God is the husbandman and prunes off the wild branches of our spiritual lives if we will but submit to his tender care. Thus we become like the tame olive tree... "The *wild olive* is a kind of reversion to the primitive plant—such as occurs also with the fig and almond—and it takes place whenever the growth of the olive is neglected... "In most neglected olive groves numerous little bushes of the 'wild olive' may be seen, which, though very unlike the cultivated tree—having a shorter, smaller, and greener leaf and a stiffer, more prickly stem—are nevertheless derived from it. As a rule the wild olive is but a shrub, but it may grow into a tree and have small but useless 'berries.' Where groves of wild olives are found in Palestine, they are probably always the descendants of cultivated trees long ago destroyed,' (James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Olive.") "The olive tree is remarkable for two other characteristics that are quite unlike other fruit-bearing trees. First, though requiring nearly fifteen years to come into full production, it may produce fruit for centuries. Some trees now growing in the Holy Land have been producing abundantly for at least four hundred years. The second amazing quality of the tree is that as it finally does grow old and begin to die, the roots send up a number of new green shoots which, if grafted and pruned in regular fashion, will mature to full-grown olive trees again. Thus, while the tree itself may produce fruit for centuries, the root of the tree may go on producing fruit and new trees for millennia. It is believed that some of the ancient olive trees in Israel today come from trees that were [in existence] when Christ was alive on the earth." (*Book of Mormon Student Manual*, 1981, pp. 138-9) which a man (Jesus Christ) took and nourished (He sends prophets, gives revelation, organizes his Church, bestows priesthoods and powers, and does all that the people will allow to make the blessings of his gospel available to his people, the house of Israel. DCBM, 2:50) in his <sup>c</sup>vineyard (the world); and it grew, and waxed old, and began to <sup>d</sup>decay. (The time period of this is unclear. This passage, describing when the house of Israel begins to decay, could be interpreted to refer to the time when Israel decided to establish a king. Or it might be after their lengthy sojourn in Egypt.)

4 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard went forth, and he saw that his olive-tree began to decay (apostasy); and he said: I will <sup>a</sup>prune it (the chastening of his chosen people), and dig about it, and nourish it, that perhaps it may shoot forth young and tender branches (the emergence of a righteous element of the house of Israel. This might be the rising generation of Israel being allowed to enter Canaan after the 40 years in the wilderness. DCBM, 2:50), and it perish not.

5 And it came to pass that he <sup>a</sup>pruned it, and digged about it, and nourished it according to his word.

6 And it came to pass that after many days it began to put forth somewhat a little, young and tender branches; but behold, the main <sup>a</sup>top thereof (The older generation steeped in sinful traditions, had become comfortable in their iniquity.) began to perish.

7 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard saw it, and he said unto his <sup>a</sup>servant (prophet or prophets): It grieveth me that I should lose this tree (The Lord loves his people, the literal seed of Abraham.); wherefore, go and pluck the branches from a <sup>b</sup>wild olive-tree (gentiles), and bring them hither unto me; and we will pluck off those main branches which are beginning to wither away, and we will cast them into the fire that they may be burned. (The scattering of Israel by the Assyrians and Babylonians. About 735-587 BC)

8 And behold, saith the Lord of the vineyard, I take <sup>a</sup>away many of these young and tender branches, and I will graft them <sup>b</sup>whithersoever I will (Scattering and dispersion of Israel throughout the world.);

and it mattereth not that if it so be that the root of this tree will perish, I may preserve the fruit thereof unto myself; wherefore, I will take these young and tender branches, and I will graft (Grafting in is joining the Church.) them whithersoever I will.

9 Take thou the branches of the wild olive-tree, and graft them in, in the <sup>a</sup>stead thereof; and these which I have plucked off I will cast into the fire and burn them, that they may not cumber the ground of my vineyard.

10 And it came to pass that the servant of the Lord of the vineyard did according to the word of the Lord of the vineyard, and grafted in the branches of the <sup>a</sup>wild olive-tree.

11 And the Lord of the vineyard caused that it should be digged about, and pruned, and nourished, saying unto his servant: It grieveth me that I should lose this tree; wherefore, that perhaps I might preserve the roots (Roots may refer to the blood of Israel.) thereof that they perish not, that I might preserve them unto myself, I have done this thing.

12 Wherefore, go thy way; watch the tree, and nourish it, according to my words. (The prophets look after the people. Ezekiel, Daniel, Malachi, Nephi, Jacob, Alma.)

13 And these will I <sup>a</sup>place in the nethermost part (Scattered to the four corners of the earth.) of my vineyard, whithersoever I will, it mattereth not unto thee; and I do it that I may preserve unto myself the natural branches of the tree (The purpose of the scattering is to preserve those literal Israelites who have demonstrated their loyalty and faithfulness.); and also, that I may lay up fruit thereof against the season, unto myself; for it grieveth me that I should lose this tree and the fruit thereof.

14 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard went his way, and hid the natural <sup>a</sup>branches (The Lehtes and Mulekites were hidden from the rest of the world.) of the tame olive-tree in the nethermost parts of the vineyard, some in one and some in another, according to his will and pleasure. (Israel is scattered throughout the world.)

15 And it came to pass that a long time passed away, (This may be from the time of Malachi (about 400 BC) to a time just beyond that of the ministry of Christ. DCBM, 2:54) and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Come, let us go down into the vineyard, that we may <sup>a</sup>labor in the vineyard.

16 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard, and also the servant, went down into the vineyard to labor. And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: Behold, look here; behold the tree.

17 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard looked and beheld the tree in the which the wild olive branches had been grafted (The Samaritans and the Gentiles that Peter and Paul preached to. The early Christian church flourished with the conversion of many Gentiles.); and it had sprung forth and begun to bear <sup>a</sup>fruit. And he beheld that it was good; and the fruit thereof was like unto the natural fruit.

18 And he said unto the servant: Behold, the branches of the wild tree have taken hold of the moisture (the living waters of the gospel) of the root thereof (In the real world, this does not happen. The wild branches will not bring forth tame fruit. This is to show the miracle that the gospel can make saints out of Gentiles.), that the root thereof hath brought forth much strength; and because of the much strength of the root thereof the wild branches have brought forth tame fruit (When we make covenants in the gospel, we bring forth works of righteousness. In John 4, the Samaritans were ready to harvest. The Samaritans were a graft into the house of Israel.). Now, if we had not grafted in these branches, the tree thereof would have perished (Converts, both Israelite and Gentile, are the life blood of the Church.). And now, behold, I shall lay up much fruit, which the tree thereof hath brought forth; and the fruit thereof I shall lay up against the season, unto mine own self.

19 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Come, let us go (The Lord is going to visit his scattered Israel.) to the nethermost part of the vineyard, and behold if the natural branches of the tree have not brought forth much fruit also, that I may lay up of the fruit thereof against the season, unto mine own self.

20 And it came to pass that they went forth whither the master had hid the natural branches of the tree, and he said unto the servant: Behold these; and he beheld the <sup>a</sup>first (The Lord of the vineyard and his servant now visit the three branches of Israel scattered in the nethermost part of the vineyard. Exactly

who is being represented here by the first two groups is unclear. The third group seems to be an obvious reference to the Lehites. Some writers have suggested the possibility that the three are the ten tribes, scattered Jews, and Lehites. For all we know, the three groups may symbolize the scattering of numerous branches of Israel, many of which we simply have no knowledge of. DCBM, 2:55) that it had<sup>b</sup> brought forth much fruit; and he beheld also that it was good. And he said unto the servant: Take of the fruit thereof, and lay it up against the season, that I may preserve it unto mine own self; for behold, said he, this long time have I nourished it, and it hath brought forth much fruit.

21 And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: How comest thou hither to plant this tree, or this branch of the tree? For behold, it was the poorest spot in all the land of thy vineyard.

22 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto him: **Counsel me not**; I knew that it was a poor spot of ground; wherefore, I said unto thee, I have nourished it this long time, and thou beholdest that it hath brought forth much fruit. **(We're not sure who this first branch is.)**

23 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Look hither; behold I have planted another branch **(We're not sure who this branch is.)** of the tree also; and thou knowest that this spot of ground was poorer than the first **(This is poorer than the poorest in verse 21)**. But, behold the tree. I have nourished it this long time, and it hath brought forth much fruit; therefore, gather it, and lay it up against the season, that I may preserve it unto mine own self.

24 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said again unto his servant: Look hither, and behold another<sup>a</sup> branch **(The Lehites)** also, which I have planted; behold that I have nourished it also, and it hath brought forth fruit. (Joseph Fielding Smith: "Now in that parable the olive tree is the House of Israel, as I have said. In its native land it began to die. So the Lord took branches like the Nephites, like the lost tribes, and like others that the Lord led off that we do not know anything about, to other parts of the earth. He planted them all over his vineyard, which is the world. No doubt he sent some of these branches into Japan, into Korea, into China. No question about it, because he sent them to all parts of the world. "Time came when in these distant parts the trees began to decay, so the Lord sent out for the last time to gather the fruit into the harvest... "Now there is your answer. That is the answer to these people who approach me with the question, what's the use of going out among the Chinese, the Japanese, the Koreans, and the people of the Far East to preach the gospel to them? The answer: because they are branches of the tree, they are of the house of Israel. The Lord took the branches of the tree, grafted them into the wild olives, the Gentiles, and is bringing the Gentiles into the gospel of Jesus Christ. "When you read that chapter through if you cannot say in your soul, 'This is absolutely a revelation from God,' then there is something wrong with you. That tells you of history. Are we going to preach the gospel in Korea, in Japan, in China? Yes, we are. Why? Because the blood of Israel is there. And the Lord did just what he said he would do with Abraham and his posterity. He scattered them over the whole face of the earth. So now the Gentiles are sanctified by the blood of Abraham" (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, vol. 4, pp. 204-7 as taken from the *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, 1981, p. 143))

25 And he said unto the servant: Look hither and behold the last. Behold, this have I planted in a<sup>a</sup> good spot of ground **(the Americas)**; and I have nourished it this long time, and only a<sup>b</sup> part of the tree hath brought forth tame fruit **(Nephites)**, and the<sup>c</sup> other part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit **(Lamanites)**; behold, I have nourished this tree **(The Lehites)** like unto the others.

26 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Pluck off the branches that have not brought forth good<sup>a</sup> fruit, and cast them into the fire. **(The more wicked members of the church will be removed.)**

27 But behold, the servant said unto him: Let us prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it a little<sup>a</sup> longer, that perhaps it may bring forth good fruit unto thee, that thou canst lay it up against the season.

28 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard and the servant of the Lord of the vineyard did nourish all the fruit of the vineyard.

29 And it came to pass that a<sup>a</sup> long time **(About 1500 years. When the gospel sun went down almost two millennia ago, when the priesthood was taken away and a dreary dusk descended in the congregations**

that once had known light, when light and truth no longer shone forth from heaven, and when those on earth no longer were taught and directed by apostles and prophets, then the spiritual darkness reigned. Darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people. The dark ages had their beginning, and the light of heaven no longer dwelt in the hearts of those who professed to worship Him whose we are... True, the heaven still teemed with stars, an uncounted host of them, for there were many wise and good people who reflected forth to others such light and truth and goodness as they had. And month after month a new moon arose to reflect such of heaven's truths as came by instinct and from reason. There was a St. Augustine, a Maimonides, a Joan of Arc, a Thomas More, a Michelangelo, a Galileo, a host of others – each for the month when their moon shone – who reflected such borrowed light as in their power lay. But the light of heaven no longer shed its rays on the strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life... But finally the heralds of a distant dawn came forth. There was a Calvin, a Zqingli, a Luther, a Wesley; there were wise and good men – morning stars who shone more brightly than their fellows – who arose in every nation. There were men of insight and courage who were sickened by the sins and evils of the night. These great souls hacked and sawed at the chains with which the masses were bound. They sought to do good and to help their fellowmen – all according to the best light and knowledge they had... When the set time had fully come – when the day for the promised restoration of all things was at hand – the Lord in heaven in his infinite wisdom, mercy and goodness, sent from the courts of glory that eternal spirit whose foreordained mission it was to usher in the dispensation of the fullness of time. Joseph Smith began his mortal life. It was December 23, 1805. The sun was then just hidden by the mountain peaks. Bruce R. McConkie, CR, April 1978, p. 17) had passed away, and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his <sup>b</sup>servant: Come, let us go down into the vineyard, that we may labor again in the vineyard. For behold, the time draweth near, and the <sup>c</sup>end soon cometh; wherefore, I must lay up fruit against the season, unto mine own self. (The Dispensation of the Fulness of Times.)

30 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard and the servant went down into the vineyard; and they came to the tree whose natural branches had been broken off, and the wild branches had been grafted in; and behold all <sup>a</sup>sorts of fruit did cumber the tree. (Many Christian churches in the last days, none of which were the true church.)

31 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard did <sup>a</sup>taste of the fruit (The Lord is the ultimate judge of the goodness of the fruits.), every sort according to its number. And the Lord of the vineyard said: Behold, this long time (God's patience shows he will not let Israel go.) have we nourished this tree, and I have laid up unto myself against the season much fruit.

32 But behold, this time it hath brought forth much <sup>a</sup>fruit, and there is <sup>b</sup>none of it which is good (No true church among all the Christian churches. "I was enraptured in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon day. They told me that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines, and that none of them was acknowledged of God as his Church and kingdom: and I was expressly commanded to go not after them, at the same time receiving a promise that the fullness of the Gospel should at some future time be made known unto me. HC, 4:536.). And behold, there are all kinds of bad fruit; and it profiteth me nothing, notwithstanding all our labor; and now it grieveth me that I should lose this tree.

33 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: What shall we do unto the tree, that I may preserve again good fruit thereof unto mine own self?

34 And the servant said unto his master: Behold, because thou didst graft in the branches of the wild olive-tree they have nourished the roots, that they are alive and they have not perished (The basic concepts of Christianity are not dead.); wherefore thou beholdest that they are yet good.

35 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: The tree profiteth me nothing, and the roots thereof profit me nothing so long as it shall bring forth evil fruit. (Even though the Christian churches have some truth, if they don't have the proper authority, it is good for nothing.)

36 Nevertheless, I know that the roots are good (The gospel is true), and for mine own purpose I have preserved them; and because of their much strength they have hitherto brought forth, from the wild branches, good fruit. (Their blood has permeated European society, and it coursed in the veins of the early colonists of America. This is the blood that has been foremost among those spirits who have come forth to accept the gospel, those who did not wait for the Elders to hunt them from the hills and corners of the earth, but they were hunting for the Elders, impelled by a spirit which then they could not understand; and for this reason were they among the first Elders of the Church; they and the fathers having been watched over from the days that God promised those blessings upon Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Ephraim. And these are they that will be found in the front ranks of all that is noble and good in their day and time, and who will be found among those whose efforts are directed in establishing upon the earth those heaven-born principles which tend directly to blessing and salvation, to ameliorating the condition of their fellow-men, and elevating them in the scale of their being; and among those also who receive the fullness of the Everlasting Gospel, and the keys of the Priesthood in the last days, through whom God determined to gather up again unto himself a peculiar people, a holy nation, a pure seed that shall stand upon Mount Zion as saviors, not only to the house of Israel but also to the house of Esau. Erastus Snow, JD 23:186.)

37 But behold, the wild branches have grown and have <sup>a</sup>overrun (Philosophies of men, Greeks or humanistic, had suppressed the truth and driven the Church of God into the wilderness.) the roots thereof; and because that the wild branches have overcome the roots thereof it hath brought forth much evil fruit; and because that it hath brought forth so much evil fruit thou beholdest that it beginneth to perish (There is so much confusion among the Christian churches that no one knows the truth of the gospel. The time period is AD 100 -1820.); and it will soon become ripened, that it may be cast into the fire, except we should do something for it to preserve it. (Restore the Gospel.)

38 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Let us go down into the nethermost parts of the vineyard, and behold if the natural branches have also brought forth evil fruit.

39 And it came to pass that they went down into the nethermost parts of the vineyard. And it came to pass that they beheld that the fruit of the natural branches had become corrupt also; yea, the <sup>a</sup>first (Northern Kingdom of Ephraim?) and the second (Jews?) and also the last (The Lehites); and they had all become corrupt. (The apostasy was universal.)

40 And the <sup>a</sup>wild fruit of the last had overcome that part of the tree which brought forth good fruit (The Lamanites killed all the Nephites), even that the branch (Nephites) had withered away and died.

41 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard wept, and said unto the servant: <sup>a</sup>What could I have done more for my vineyard? (Jeffrey R. Holland: "There is much more here than simply the unraveling of convoluted Israelite history. Of greater significance in this allegory is the benevolent view of God that it provides. He is portrayed here as one who repeatedly, painstakingly, endlessly tries to save the work of His hands and in moments of greatest disappointment holds His head in His hands and weeps, 'What could I have done more for my vineyard?' (Jacob 5:41, 47, 49.) This allegory is a declaration of divine love, of God's unceasing effort as a father laboring on behalf of His children. As one writer has noted, 'Zenos's allegory ought to take its place beside the parable of the prodigal son. Both stories make the Lord's mercy so movingly memorable.' (John S. Tanner, "Jacob and His Descendants as Authors," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne [Provo: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies; and Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991], p. 61.)" (*Heroes from the Book of Mormon*, p. 37) Boyd K. Packer: "How many bishops with disappointing results have felt to say those very words in their souls? 'What could I have done more for my ward? Why wild fruit after all our work?' 'It was the servant-it always is the servant-who said: 'Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard-have not the branches thereof overcome the roots which are good? And because the branches have overcome the roots thereof, behold they grew faster than the strength of the roots, taking strength unto themselves.' (Jacob 5:48.)" (*The Things of the Soul*, p. 164))

42 Behold, I knew that all the fruit of the vineyard, save it were these, had become <sup>a</sup>corrupted. And now

these which have once brought forth good fruit have also become corrupted; and now all the trees of my vineyard are good for nothing save it be to be <sup>b</sup>hewn down and cast into the fire.

43 And behold this last, whose branch hath withered away (The Lehites), I did plant in a <sup>a</sup>good spot of ground (America); yea, even that which was choice unto me above all other parts of the land of my vineyard.

44 And thou beheldest that I also cut down that which <sup>a</sup>cumbered this spot of ground (The Jaredites), that I might plant this tree in the stead thereof. (The Lehites)

45 And thou beheldest that a <sup>a</sup>part thereof brought forth good fruit (Nephites), and a part thereof brought forth wild fruit (Lamanites); and because I plucked not the branches thereof and cast them into the fire, behold, they have overcome the good branch that it hath withered away. (The Lamanites destroyed the Nephites)

46 And now, behold, notwithstanding all the care which we have taken of my vineyard, the trees thereof have become corrupted (False influences overcame the pure doctrines and practices of the gospel and a universal apostasy prevailed.), that they bring forth no good <sup>a</sup>fruit; and these I had hoped to preserve, to have laid up fruit thereof against the season, unto mine own self. But, behold, they have become like unto the wild olive-tree, and they are of no worth but to be <sup>b</sup>hewn down and cast into the fire; and it grieveth me that I should lose them. (The Lamanites dwindled in unbelief)

47 But <sup>a</sup>what could I have done more in my vineyard? Have I slackened mine hand, that I have not nourished it? Nay, I have nourished it, and I have digged about it, and I have pruned it, and I have dunged it; and I have <sup>b</sup>stretched forth mine <sup>c</sup>hand almost all the day long, and the <sup>d</sup>end draweth nigh. And it grieveth me that I should hew down all the trees of my vineyard, and cast them into the fire that they should be burned. Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?

48 And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: Is it not the <sup>a</sup>loftiness of thy vineyard—have not the branches thereof overcome the roots which are good (Pride caused the apostasy. The Church must never grow faster than the leadership can handle.)? And because the branches have overcome the roots thereof, behold they grew faster than the strength of the roots, <sup>b</sup>taking strength unto themselves (Don't rely simply upon your own merits and talents. Rely on the Lord for help in all things.). Behold, I say, is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have become corrupted? (There are so many false churches that take authority unto themselves that all are corrupt.)

49 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Let us go to and hew down the trees of the vineyard and cast them into the fire, that they shall not cumber the ground of my vineyard, for I have done all. What could I have done more for my vineyard?

50 But, behold, the servant said unto the Lord of the vineyard: Spare it a little <sup>a</sup>longer.

51 And the Lord said: Yea, I will spare it a little longer, for it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard.

52 Wherefore, let us take of the <sup>a</sup>branches of these which I have planted in the nethermost parts of my vineyard (The Lost Tribes of Israel), and let us graft them (The pure blood of Israel is being gathered. The gathering also includes the Gentiles.) into the tree from whence they came (The restoration of the gospel and the gathering of the seed of Abraham has begun.); and let us pluck from the tree those branches whose fruit is most bitter, and graft in the natural branches (True blood descendants of Israel) of the tree in the stead thereof.

53 And this will I do that the tree may not perish (The Gospel to be restored), that, perhaps, I may preserve unto myself the roots thereof for mine <sup>a</sup>own purpose. (This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. Moses 1:39)

54 And, behold, the roots of the natural branches of the tree which I planted whithersoever I would are yet alive (Israel is to be gathered.); wherefore, that I may preserve them also for mine own purpose, I will take of the <sup>a</sup>branches of this tree, and I will <sup>b</sup>graft them in unto them. Yea, I will graft in unto them the branches of their mother tree (Those that are gathered into the Church are for the most part literal descendants of Israel. The gathering of the branches began in the Spring of 1820 in a grove of trees.),

that I may preserve the roots also unto mine own self, that when they shall be sufficiently strong (The church will need to have a time to grow and develop.) perhaps they may bring forth good fruit unto me, and I may yet have glory in the fruit of my vineyard. ("To the missionaries of the latter days the Lord has said: 'Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect,' for, the Lord explained, 'mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts' (D&C 29:7). For theirs was a 'believing blood.' 'What then is believing blood? It is the blood that flows in the veins of those who are the literal seed of Abraham—not that the blood itself believes, but that those born in that lineage have both the right and a special spiritual capacity to recognize, receive, and believe the truth. The term is simply a beautiful, a poetic, and a symbolic way of referring to the seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made. It identifies those who developed in pre-existence the talent to recognize the truth and to desire righteousness.' (New Witness, pp. 38-39)" (McConkie and Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, vol. 2, p. 61))

55 And it came to pass that they took from the natural tree which had become wild (Apostate church), and grafted in unto the natural trees (The pure gospel of Jesus Christ), which also had become wild.

56 And they also took of the natural trees which had become wild, and <sup>a</sup>grafted into their mother tree.

57 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Pluck not the wild branches from the trees (Let the wicked grow among the faithful for a time), save it be those which are most bitter (We don't excommunicate every person who struggles with the Word of Wisdom, nor should we disfellowship those of our brethren and sisters of the faith who innocently err in doctrine. DCBM, 2:66. Serious sins must be appropriately dealt with.); and in them ye shall graft according to that which I have said.

58 And we will nourish again the trees of the vineyard (The gospel will be taught to the descendants of Israel throughout the world.), and we will trim up the <sup>a</sup>branches thereof (To chasten the members of the church so that they will repent; the purifying of the saints, the preparation of the bride for the Bridegroom.); and we will pluck from the trees those branches which are ripened (Excommunication), that must perish, and cast them into the fire.

59 And this I do that, perhaps, the roots thereof may take strength because of their goodness; and because of the change of the branches, that the good may <sup>a</sup>overcome the evil. (Missionary work will be successful. The allegory makes it clear that the grafting and pruning process, the gathering of Israel and the trying of the nations of the earth, will continue simultaneously until the Millennium. This means that as the Saints accept and assimilate additional nourishment from their scriptural sources, the Lord will require a higher level of performance. Thus the allegory foresees in the grafting and pruning process a reversal of what President Benson has called the Samuel principle. According to this principle, "within certain bounds [God] grants unto men according to their desires." The principle received its name from the story in 1 Samuel 8 where the people of Israel demand, contrary to the wishes of God and his prophet Samuel, that God give them a king. God granted them their desire to their own eventual sorrow. The reverse of the Samuel principle during the Restoration can be illustrated by the Word of Wisdom. As the Saints assimilated and lived the Word of Wisdom, God saw fit to require a more strict application of it, until today it is often used as a measure of a member's commitment to the kingdom. Other examples of additional nourishment must include the material in sections 137 and 138 of the Doctrine and Covenants. These revelations were just as true when they were received as when they were accepted by the Church as scripture in 1976 and, therefore, as binding on the membership. Perhaps, as the allegory in principle suggests, the members were capable in 1976 of submitting themselves to the additional instruction available in these visions. Both the initial gift of the Word of Wisdom in 1833 and its subsequent development in the Church and the addition of sections 137 and 138 to the canon are modern examples of how our scriptural heritage, our roots, "may take [additional] strength because of their goodness" (Jacob 5:59). In the future, as we are faithful in assimilating the nourishment from the roots, we can look forward to an even greater scriptural heritage, for God "will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 9). (Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5* [Salt Lake City

and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994], 87.))

60 And because that I have preserved the natural branches (House of Israel) and the roots thereof (The gospel), and that I have grafted in the natural branches again into their mother tree (These are the literal seed of Abraham.), and have preserved the roots of their mother tree, that, perhaps, the trees of my vineyard may bring forth again good <sup>a</sup>fruit; and that I may have joy again in the fruit of my vineyard, and, perhaps, that I may rejoice exceedingly that I have preserved the roots and the branches of the first fruit—

61 Wherefore, go to, and call <sup>a</sup>servants, (Prophets, apostles and missionaries) that we may <sup>b</sup>labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may <sup>c</sup>prepare the way (Joseph Smith was an Elias preparing the way for the Messiah.), that I may bring forth again the natural fruit (The House of Israel), which natural fruit is good and the most precious above all other fruit. (The favored lineage)

62 Wherefore, let us go to and labor with our might this last time (The preaching of the gospel by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the last days.), for behold the end draweth nigh (The millennium is coming soon), and this is for the last time that I shall <sup>a</sup>prune my vineyard.

63 Graft in the branches (Gather Israel); begin at the <sup>a</sup>last (Start among the gentiles, meaning the nation of gentiles.) that they may be first, and that the first (The Jews) may be <sup>b</sup>last, and dig about the trees, both old and young, the first and the last; and the last and the first (The Lord has a divine timetable, wherein the gospel is presented to the people on earth. In the meridian of time the gospel went first to the Jews and then to the Gentiles. In our day the message of the Restoration is taken first to the Gentiles (Israelites scattered among and identified with the Gentiles) and then to the house of Israel, meaning specifically the Lamanites and the Jews. Thus the first (the Jews) shall, in the last days, be last; and the last (the Gentiles) shall, in the final dispensation, be first. DCBM, 2:71) that all may be nourished once again for the last time. (The preaching of the gospel to all of Israel.)

64 Wherefore, dig about them, and prune them, and dung them once more, for the last time, for the end draweth nigh. And if it be so that these last grafts shall grow, and bring forth the natural fruit, then shall ye prepare the way for them, that they may grow. (The Church to grow)

65 And as they begin to grow ye shall <sup>a</sup>clear away the branches which bring forth bitter fruit, according to the strength of the good and the size thereof; and ye shall not clear away the bad thereof all at once, lest the roots thereof should be too strong for the graft, and the graft thereof shall perish, and I lose the trees of my vineyard. (The parable of the wheat and tares. Let the tares grow among the wheat until the wheat is sufficiently strong. Then gather and bind the tares for burning.)

66 For it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard (God loves all his children and does not want to lose any of them.); wherefore ye shall clear away the bad according as the good shall grow, that the root and the top may be equal in strength, until the good shall overcome the bad, and the bad be hewn down and cast into the fire, that they cumber not the ground of my vineyard; and thus will I sweep away the bad out of my vineyard. (The wicked will be destroyed at the Second Coming leaving the righteous.)

67 And the branches of the natural tree will I graft in again into the natural tree; (After the Second Coming and during the millennium, the gathering of Israel will continue)

68 And the branches of the natural tree will I graft into the natural branches of the tree; and thus will I bring them together again, that they shall bring forth the natural <sup>a</sup>fruit, and they shall be one. (This is when the Jews will finally accept Christ. The tribes of Ephraim and Judah will become one. All of Israel will be in the Church during the Millennium.)

69 And the bad shall be <sup>a</sup>cast away (The end of the world is the destruction of the wicked.), yea, even out of all the land of my vineyard; for behold, only this once will I prune my vineyard. (The wicked will be destroyed at the Second Coming.)

70 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard sent his <sup>a</sup>servant; and the servant went and did as the Lord had commanded him, and brought other <sup>b</sup>servants; and they were <sup>c</sup>few. (Few in comparison to the rest of the world, but still there will be many.)

71 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto them: Go to, and <sup>a</sup>labor in the vineyard, with your might. For behold, this is the <sup>b</sup>last time that I shall <sup>c</sup>nourish my vineyard; for the end is nigh at hand, and the season speedily cometh; and if ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come. (Great shall be your joy in bringing save it be one into my kingdom.)

72 And it came to pass that the servants did go and labor with their might; and the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them (President Harold B. Lee spoke the following penetrating words as he closed a general conference: There has come to me in these last few days a deepening and reassuring faith. I can't leave this conference without saying to you that I have a conviction that the Master hasn't been absent from us on these occasions. This is his church. Where else would he rather be than right here at the headquarters of his church? He isn't an absentee master; he is concerned about us. He wants us to follow where he leads. CR, October 1972, p. 176); and they did obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things. (Faithful and true servants of the Lord, the Apostles and Prophets and faithful members of the Church who magnify their callings and teach their families.)

73 And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard; and the natural branches began to grow and thrive exceedingly (During the Millennium, the church will grow faster than ever before because Satan will be bound. The work of gathering will go forward in an unprecedented manner during the thousand years of peace. There will be hosts of non-members of the Church and, for that matter, numerous churches on the earth as the Millennium begins. But such shall not be the case as the glory of the Millennium grows in intensity through the thousand years. President Joseph Fielding Smith said: Some members of the Church have an erroneous idea that when the millennium comes all of the people are going to be swept off the earth except righteous members of the church. That is not so. There will be millions of people... of all classes, and of all beliefs, still permitted to remain upon the face of the earth, but they will be those who have lived clean lives, those who have been free from wickedness and corruption. All who belong, by virtue of their good lives, to the terrestrial order, as well as those who have kept the celestial law, will remain upon the face of the earth during the millennium. Eventually, however, the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters do the sea. But there will be need for the preaching of the gospel, after the millennium is brought in, until all men are either converted or pass away. In the course of the thousand years all men will either come into the Church, or kingdom of God, or they will die and pass away. In that day there will be no death until men are old. Children will not die but will live to the age of a tree. Isaiah says this is 100 years. When the time comes for men to die, they will be changed in the twinkling of an eye, and there will be no graves. Doctrines of Salvation, 1:86-87. It follows that missionary work will continue into the Millennium until all who remain are converted... Then every living soul on earth will belong to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Millennial Messiah, p. 652); and the wild branches began to be plucked off and to be cast away (Those that do not accept the Gospel during the Millennium, will be destroyed.); and they did keep the root and the top thereof equal, according to the strength thereof.

74 And thus they labored, with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, even until the bad had been cast away out of the vineyard, and the Lord had preserved unto himself that the trees had become again the natural fruit; and they became like unto <sup>a</sup>one body; and the fruits were equal (Law of Consecration); and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit, which was most precious unto him from the beginning. (Israel was chosen in the pre-existence.)

75 And it came to pass that when the <sup>a</sup>Lord of the vineyard saw that his fruit was good, and that his vineyard was no more corrupt, he called up his servants, and said unto them: Behold, for this last time have we nourished my vineyard; and thou beholdest that I have done according to my will; and I have preserved the natural fruit, that it is good, even like as it was in the beginning. And <sup>b</sup>blessed art thou; for because ye have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard, and have kept my commandments, and have brought unto me again the <sup>c</sup>natural fruit, that my vineyard is no more corrupted, and the bad is

cast away, behold ye shall have <sup>d</sup>joy with me because of the fruit of my vineyard. (These are they who inherit the Celestial Kingdom.)

76 For behold, for a <sup>a</sup>long time (1,000 years of the Millennium.) will I lay up of the fruit of my vineyard unto mine own self against the season, which speedily cometh; and for the last time have I nourished my vineyard, and pruned it, and dug about it, and dunged it; wherefore I will lay up unto mine own self of the fruit, for a long time, according to that which I have spoken.

77 And when the time cometh that evil fruit shall again come into my vineyard (After the Millennium, Satan will again be loosed and he will gather to him all the wicked. This may mean those who are sons of perdition that have become resurrected at the end of the Millennium.), then will I cause the <sup>a</sup>good and the bad to be gathered; and the good will I preserve unto myself, and the bad will I cast away into its own place (Satan and the SOPs will be cast out into outer darkness.). And then cometh the <sup>b</sup>season and the end; and my vineyard will I cause to be <sup>c</sup>burned with <sup>d</sup>fire. (The celestialization of the earth. I cannot complete this discussion of the allegory of the olive tree without returning to the beginning, the reason Jacob gave the allegory: How can we be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ? If I were writing in good Hebrew style I would expect the reader at this point to know, from the allegory itself and the above discussion, how reconciliation takes place. But I am not, and I would be untrue to my own heritage if I did not to the best of my ability clearly explain how we can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. As the allegory suggests, the process is deceptively simple and easy: Remain attached long enough to our roots, the scriptural heritage revealed by the God of Israel, that the healing influence of divine direction, of a "knowledge of the true Messiah," our Lord and Redeemer (1 Nephi 10:14), can change us from a twig bearing bitter fruit to a natural twig bearing good fruit. It does not matter whether our scriptural heritage is planted in a good spot on the earth or a bad one, we can bear fruit under the loving and wise care of the Lord of the vineyard. As Limhi, a man who himself had groped for reconciliation and found it, said, "If [we] will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put [our] trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if [we] do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure" (Mosiah 7:33), succor us, nourish us, and save us from destruction. Only our pride or self-will can prevent us from producing good fruit, thereby precipitating our own pruning from the tree. In language more related to the allegory than a first glance might suggest, Jacob stated the formula both simply and eloquently: "How merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches; and he stretches forth his hands unto them all the day long; and they are a stiffnecked and a gainsaying people; but as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I beseech of you in words of soberness that ye would repent, and come with full purpose of heart, and cleave unto God as he cleaveth unto you" (Jacob 6:4-5). Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds., *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5* [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994], 87.) The destruction of the wicked at the time of the Second Coming is known as the end of the world. The final destruction of Satan and his hosts – the battle of Gog and Magog results in the end of the earth. DCBM, 2:76)

## CHAPTER 6

*The Lord shall recover Israel in the last days—Then the world shall be burned with fire—Men must follow Christ to avoid the lake of fire and brimstone. [Between 544 and 421 B.C.]*

1 AND now, behold, my brethren, as I said unto you that I would prophesy, behold, this is my prophecy—that the things which this prophet <sup>a</sup>Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, in the which he likened them unto a tame <sup>b</sup>olive-tree, must surely come to pass.

2 And the day (The Dispensation of the Fullness of Times) that he shall set his hand again the second time to <sup>a</sup>recover his people, is the day, yea, even the last time, that the <sup>b</sup>servants of the Lord shall go

forth in his <sup>c</sup>power, to <sup>d</sup>nourish and prune his <sup>c</sup>vineyard; and after that the <sup>f</sup>end soon cometh. (Jacob is saying that the bulk of the allegory is actually going to find fulfillment in the last dispensation prior to the Second Coming.)

3 And how <sup>a</sup>blessed are they who have labored <sup>b</sup>diligently in his vineyard; and how <sup>c</sup>cursed are they who shall be cast out into their own place! And the <sup>d</sup>world shall be <sup>e</sup>burned with fire.

4 And how merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth the house of <sup>a</sup>Israel, both roots and branches; and he stretches forth his <sup>b</sup>hands unto them all the day long; and they are <sup>a</sup>stiffnecked and a gainsaying people; (quick to object, to oppose, resist, contradict, or speak against that which comes from God.) but as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God.

5 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I beseech of you in words of soberness that ye would repent, and come with full purpose of heart, and <sup>a</sup>cleave unto God as he cleaveth unto you. And while his <sup>b</sup>arm of mercy is extended towards you in the light of the day, harden not your hearts.

6 Yea, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; for why will ye <sup>a</sup>die?

7 For behold, after ye have been nourished by the good <sup>a</sup>word of God all the day long (The Lord has patience with us and will work as much as we will let him. Each of us has a plan.), will ye bring forth evil fruit, that ye must be <sup>b</sup>hewn down and cast into the fire?

8 Behold, will ye reject these words? (The words spoken of Christ.) Will ye reject the words of the <sup>a</sup>prophets; and will ye reject all the words which have been spoken concerning Christ, after so many have spoken concerning him; and <sup>b</sup>deny the good word of Christ, and the power of God, and the <sup>c</sup>gift of the Holy Ghost, and quench the Holy Spirit, and make a <sup>d</sup>mock of the great plan of redemption, which hath been laid for you?

9 Know ye not that if ye will do these things, that the power of the redemption and the resurrection, which is in Christ, will bring you to stand with <sup>a</sup>shame and <sup>b</sup>awful <sup>c</sup>guilt before the bar of God?

10 And according to the power of <sup>a</sup>justice, for justice cannot be denied, ye must go away into that <sup>b</sup>lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames are unquenchable, and whose smoke ascendeth up forever and ever, which lake of fire and brimstone is <sup>c</sup>endless <sup>d</sup>torment.

11 O then, my beloved brethren, repent ye, and enter in at the <sup>a</sup>strait gate, and <sup>b</sup>continue in the way which is narrow, until ye shall obtain eternal life.

12 O be <sup>a</sup>wise; what can I say more?

13 Finally, I bid you farewell (Jacob thought this was the end of his writings. But he has such a remarkable experience, that he must write a little more.), until I shall meet you before the <sup>a</sup>pleasing bar of God, which bar striketh the wicked with <sup>b</sup>awful dread and fear. Amen.

## CHAPTER 7

*Sherem denies Christ, contends with Jacob, demands a sign, and is smitten of God—All of the prophets have spoken of Christ and his atonement—The Nephites lived out their days as wanderers, born in tribulation, and hated by the Lamanites. [Between 544 and 421 B.C.]*

1 AND now it came to pass after some years had passed away (Jacob had thought that he would not write anything else, but he had such a significant experience that he thought writing about it would help us in our day.), there came a man among the people of Nephi, whose name was <sup>a</sup>Sherem.

2 And it came to pass that he began to preach among the people, and to declare unto them that there should be <sup>a</sup>no Christ. (Anti Christs of our day teach man's self reliance for his own well being, that Jesus was a great moral teacher and community leader.) And he preached many things which were <sup>b</sup>flattering unto the people; and this he did that he might <sup>b</sup>overthrow the doctrine of Christ. (Flattery is an overstatement of a truth, it is trying to get someone onto your side. Excessive praise for purposes of manipulation. The anti-Christ is angry with the truth because those principles testify against his own wickedness.)

3 And he labored diligently that he might lead away the hearts of the people, insomuch that he did lead away many hearts; and he knowing that I, Jacob, had faith in Christ who should come, he sought much opportunity that he might come unto me. (Sharem challenges the prophet of God. Sharem knew the truth (ver 14) but was teaching against Christ. If he could convince Jacob to follow him, then we would also get those that followed Jacob.)

4 And he was <sup>a</sup>learned, that he had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people; wherefore, he could use much <sup>b</sup>flattery, and much power of speech, according to the <sup>c</sup>power of the devil.

5 And he had hope to shake me from the faith, notwithstanding the many <sup>a</sup>revelations and the many things which I had seen concerning these things; for I truly had seen <sup>b</sup>angels, and they had ministered unto me. And also, I had <sup>c</sup>heard the voice of the Lord speaking unto me in very word, from time to time; wherefore, I could not be shaken.

6 And it came to pass that he came unto me, and on this wise did he speak unto me, saying: Brother Jacob, I have sought much opportunity that I might speak unto you; for I have heard and also know that thou goest about much, preaching that which ye call the <sup>a</sup>gospel, or the doctrine of Christ.

7 And ye have led away much of this people that they pervert the right way of God, and <sup>a</sup>keep not the law of Moses which is the right way; and convert the law of Moses into the worship of a being which ye say shall come many hundred years hence. And now behold, I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is <sup>b</sup>blasphemy; for no man knoweth of such things; for he cannot <sup>c</sup>tell of things to come (Sherem would have had to have received a revelation about this, because it was not taught in the scriptures or the Law of Moses that he professed to follow.). And after this manner did Sherem contend against me.

8 But behold, the Lord God poured in his <sup>a</sup>Spirit into my soul, insomuch that I did <sup>b</sup>confound him in all his words.

9 And I said unto him: Deniest thou the Christ who shall come? And he said: If there should be a Christ, I would not deny him (a lie); but I know that there is no Christ, neither has been, nor ever will be.

10 And I said unto him: Believest thou the scriptures? And he said, Yea.

11 And I said unto him: Then ye do not understand them; for they truly testify of Christ. Behold, I say unto you that none of the <sup>a</sup>prophets have written, nor <sup>b</sup>prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ.

12 And this is not all—it has been made manifest unto me, for I have heard and seen; and it also has been made manifest unto me by the <sup>a</sup>power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, I know if there should be no atonement made all mankind must be <sup>b</sup>lost.

13 And it came to pass that he said unto me: Show me a <sup>a</sup>sign by this power of the Holy Ghost, in the which ye know so much. (Signs or miracles do not convert people. Sometimes they don't even satisfy curiosity. Jesus taught that an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign (Matt 12:39), to which Joseph Smith added that this principle is eternal, undeviating, and firm as the pillars of heaven; for whenever you see a man seeking after a sign, you may set it down that he is an adulterous man. TPJS, 157. Why is this so? How does a disposition to seek after signs relate to seeking after carnal pleasures? Men and women who have given themselves up to their lusts, who desire that which will satiate the flesh, who have exhausted their passions in their search for the sensual – these seek for spiritual sensations; these demand proof! Unable to recognize and acknowledge eternal certainties, they turn to that realm they have come to understand – the fanciful and the physical. Those who worship at the altar of appetite, whose thresholds for gratification are ever rising, thus demand something extraordinary to establish the truthfulness of a claim, a claim, ironically, that is verified by the quiet and unobtrusive whisperings of the Spirit. Spiritual blindness (as evidenced by Sherem) and the spirit of adultery are common companions. DCBM, 2:88)

14 And I said unto him: What am I that I should <sup>a</sup>tempt God to show unto thee a sign in the thing which thou knowest to be <sup>b</sup>true? (Sharem actually knew the truth.) Yet thou wilt deny it, because thou art of the <sup>c</sup>devil. Nevertheless, not my will be done; but if God shall smite thee, let that be a <sup>d</sup>sign unto thee that he has power, both in heaven and in earth; and also, that Christ shall come. And thy will, O Lord, be done,

and not mine. (When The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints was first founded, you could see persons rise up and ask, 'What sign will you show us that we may be able to believe?' I recollect a Campbellite preacher who came to Joseph Smith, I think his name was Hayden. He came in and made himself known to Joseph, and said that he had come a considerable distance to be convinced of the truth. 'Why,' said he, 'Mr. Smith, I want to know the truth, and when I am convinced, I will spend all my talents and time in defending and spreading the doctrines of your religion, and I will give you to understand that to convince me is equivalent to convincing all my society, amounting to several hundreds.' Well, Joseph commenced laying before him the coming forth of the work, and the first principles of the Gospel, when Mr. Hayden exclaimed, 'O this is not the evidence I want, the evidence that I wish to have is a notable miracle; I want to see some powerful manifestation of the power of God, I want to see a notable miracle performed; and if you perform such a one, then I will believe with all my heart and soul, and will exert all my power and all my extensive influence to convince others; and if you will not perform a miracle of this kind, then I am your worst and bitterest enemy.' 'Well,' said Joseph, 'what will you have done? Will you be struck blind, or dumb? Will you be paralyzed, or will you have one hand withered? Take your choice, choose which you please, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ it shall be done' 'That is not the kind of miracle I want,' said the preacher. 'Then, sir,' replied Joseph, 'I can perform none; I am not going to bring any trouble upon any body else, sir, to convince you'" (JD 2:326.)

15 And it came to pass that when I, Jacob, had spoken these words, the power of the Lord came upon him, insomuch that he fell to the earth. And it came to pass that he was nourished for the space of many days. (That is, Sherem was taught and instructed in the ways of truth and righteousness – he was nourished by the good word of God. Physical nourishment may also have been involved: Sherem was now unable to care for himself. DCBM, 2:89)

16 And it came to pass that he said unto the people: Gather together on the morrow, for I shall die; wherefore, I desire to speak unto the people before I shall die.

17 And it came to pass that on the morrow the multitude were gathered together; and he spake plainly unto them and denied the things which he had taught them, and confessed the Christ, and the power of the Holy Ghost, and the ministering of angels.

18 And he spake plainly unto them, that he had been <sup>a</sup>deceived by the power of the <sup>b</sup>devil. And he spake of hell, and of <sup>c</sup>eternity, and of eternal <sup>d</sup>punishment.

19 And he said: I <sup>a</sup>fear lest I have committed the <sup>b</sup>unpardonable sin, for I have lied unto God (Though the ultimate fate of Sherem is not known to us – whether, for instance, he will come forth in the resurrection to the terrestrial or the telestial kingdom – this we do know: deathbed repentance does not have within it the seeds of everlasting life. His sin is not unpardonable – he will not be numbered among the sons of perdition – for he still possessed a soul capable of repentance, which disposition is wholly alien to a son of perdition. TPJS, p. 358, DCBM, 2:90); for I denied the Christ, and said that I believed the scriptures; and they truly testify of him. And because I have thus lied unto God I greatly fear lest my case shall be <sup>c</sup>awful; but I confess unto God.

20 And it came to pass that when he had said these words he could say no more, and he <sup>a</sup>gave up the <sup>b</sup>ghost.

21 And when the multitude had witnessed that he spake these things as he was about to give up the ghost, they were astonished exceedingly; insomuch that the power of God came down upon them, and they were <sup>a</sup>overcome that they fell to the earth.

22 Now, this thing was pleasing unto me, Jacob, for I had requested it of my Father who was in heaven; for he had heard my cry and answered my prayer.

23 And it came to pass that peace and the <sup>a</sup>love of God was restored again among the people; and they <sup>b</sup>sought the scriptures, and hearkened no more to the words of this wicked man. (The scriptures are the standard and will help us so we are not deceived.)

24 And it came to pass that many means were devised to <sup>a</sup>reclaim and restore the Lamanites to the

knowledge of the truth; but it all was <sup>b</sup>vain, for they delighted in <sup>c</sup>wars and <sup>d</sup>bloodshed, and they had an eternal <sup>e</sup>hatred against us, their brethren. And they sought by the power of their arms to destroy us continually.

25 Wherefore, the people of Nephi did fortify against them with their arms, and with all their might, trusting in the God and <sup>a</sup>rock of their salvation; wherefore, they became as yet, conquerors of their enemies. (Defend against your enemies with weapons. God expects us to all we can to defend ourselves. Then He will fight our battles, if necessary.)

26 And it came to pass that I, Jacob, began to be old; and the record of this people being kept on the <sup>a</sup>other plates of Nephi, wherefore, I conclude this record, declaring that I have written according to the best of my knowledge, by saying that the time passed away with us, and also our <sup>b</sup>lives passed away like as it were unto us a <sup>c</sup>dream, we being a <sup>d</sup>lonesome and a solemn people, <sup>e</sup>wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and hated of our brethren, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our days. (Our lives are like a dream.)

27 And I, Jacob, saw that I must soon go down to my grave; wherefore, I said unto my son <sup>a</sup>Enos: Take these <sup>b</sup>plates. And I told him the things which my brother Nephi had <sup>c</sup>commanded me, and he promised obedience unto the commands. And I make an end of my writing upon these plates, which writing has been <sup>d</sup>small; and to the reader I bid farewell, hoping that many of my brethren may read my words. Brethren, adieu. (Some anti-LDS critics of the Book of Mormon have raised the question as to how Jacob could possibly have used such a word as “adieu” when this word clearly comes from the French language, which was not developed until hundreds of years after the time of Jacob. Such critics evidently overlook the fact that the Book of Mormon is translation literature, and Joseph Smith felt free in his translation to use any words familiar to himself and his readers that would best convey the meaning of the original author. It is interesting to note that there is a Hebrew word *Lehitra’ot*, which has essentially the same meaning in Hebrew as the word “adieu” in French. Both of these words are much more than a simple farewell; they include the idea of a blessing. Would it be unreasonable to remind these critics that *none of the words* contained in the English translation of the book of Jacob were used by Jacob himself? These words all come from the English language which did not come into existence until long after Jacob’s time? Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 163.)

### **Additional Reading:**

1 Nephi 10:12-14 -12 Yea, even my father spake much concerning the Gentiles, and also concerning the house of Israel, that *they should be compared like unto an <sup>a</sup>olive-tree*, whose <sup>b</sup>branches should be broken off and should be <sup>c</sup>scattered upon all the face of the earth. 13 Wherefore, he said it must needs be that we should be led with one accord into the <sup>a</sup>land of promise, unto the fulfilling of the word of the Lord, that we should be scattered upon all the face of the earth. 14 And after the house of <sup>a</sup>Israel should be scattered they should be <sup>b</sup>gathered together again; or, in fine, after the <sup>c</sup>Gentiles had received the fulness of the <sup>d</sup>Gospel, the natural branches of the <sup>e</sup>olive-tree, or the <sup>f</sup>remnants of the house of <sup>g</sup>Israel, should be grafted in, or <sup>h</sup>come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer.

1 Nephi 22:3-5 - 3 Wherefore, the things of which I have read are things pertaining to things both <sup>a</sup>temporal and spiritual; for it appears that the house of Israel, sooner or later, will be <sup>b</sup>scattered upon all the face of the earth, and also <sup>c</sup>among all nations. 4 And behold, there are many who are already lost from the knowledge of those who are at Jerusalem. Yea, the more part of all the <sup>a</sup>tribes have been <sup>b</sup>led away; and they are <sup>c</sup>scattered to and fro upon the <sup>d</sup>isles of the sea; and whither they are none of us knoweth, save that we know that they have been led away. 5 And since they have been led away, these things have been prophesied concerning them, and also concerning all those who shall hereafter be

scattered and be confounded, because of the Holy One of Israel; for against him will they <sup>a</sup>harden their hearts; wherefore, they shall be scattered among all nations and shall be <sup>b</sup>hated of all men.

## BIBLE DICTIONARY OLIVE TREE

The well-known *Olea europea*. It is extensively cultivated in Palestine for the sake of the oil. The olive requires being grafted; hence Paul's allusion to the gentiles (Rom. 11: 17-24); but what he describes is the reverse of the ordinary gardening operation, and is therefore spoken of as "contrary to nature" (v. 24). Using the olive tree in an allegorical sense to illustrate Israel and the gentiles is also done by Zeno, as quoted by Jacob 5: 6. Isaiah uses the illustration of a grape vine for the same purpose (Isa. 5: 1-7).

### **Rom. 11: 17-24**

17 And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive <sup>a</sup>tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree;  
18 <sup>a</sup>Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.  
19 Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in.  
20 Well; because of <sup>a</sup>unbelief they were <sup>b</sup>broken off, and thou standest by <sup>c</sup>faith. Be not highminded, but <sup>d</sup>fear:  
21 For if God spared not the <sup>a</sup>natural branches, *take heed* lest he also <sup>b</sup>spare not thee.  
22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.  
23 And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again.  
24 For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural *branches*, be grafted into their own olive tree?

### **Jacob 5: 6**

6 And it came to pass that after many days it began to put forth somewhat a little, young and tender branches; but behold, the main <sup>a</sup>top thereof began to perish.

### **Isa. 5: 1-7**

1 <sup>a</sup>Now will I sing <sup>b</sup>to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his <sup>c</sup>vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard <sup>d</sup>in a very fruitful hill:  
2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.  
3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.  
4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth <sup>a</sup>wild grapes?  
5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my <sup>a</sup>vineyard: I will <sup>b</sup>take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; *and* break down the <sup>c</sup>wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down:  
6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.  
7 For the <sup>a</sup>vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for <sup>b</sup>judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold <sup>c</sup>a cry.