

1r-BoM-13
The Parable of the Tame and Wild Olive Tree
(Jacob 5-7)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is prophecy which The Book of Mormon helps fulfill)

I. Isaiah and Paul spoke of the Lord's Olive Tree, with natural branches being broken off and scattered, wild branches being grafted in. Both related it to the scattering and re-gathering of Israel (See Isaiah 5:1-7; Romans 11:27). However Zenos' allegory adds many important details.

A. **We learn a major part of those scattered branches are fulfilled by Lehi and his descendants.**

B. Zenos' version gives far more details about the Lord's **vital work in our days --- the Last Days**, with the re-grafting of the formerly broken off branches into its original root.

C. Many have pointed out that olive culture actually uses the processes given in the parable to help produce the best fruit.

II. A review of the other writings help confirm the most important message in the parable.

A. Paul taught that a major reason God took His Church from Israel, giving it to the Gentiles, was so no one **can feel pride that they are saved due to a specific genetic heritage (Romans 11:17-26).**

B. Thus the true Pride that Zenos' allegory warns of is like the pride of Rameumptom: a belief that "thou hast elected us [and only us] to be thy holy children" (Alma 31:16).

C. Zenos' allegory verifies God's kingdom will go to the righteous who have accepted His Gospel and Atonement and have kept his commandments, not to any due to a specific heritage.

D. Paul's use of this Olive Tree imagery makes this the most clear. He explains in Romans 11 that neither Jew nor Gentile can feel pride in possessing God's covenants. In fact, **such pride would actually undermine their keeping of this great gift.**

1. Thus he warns the Gentiles, "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; **Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee**" (Romans 11:17-18) "For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee (v. 21)."

III. In fact Paul makes clear this will happen! Israel will re-inherit the Gospel in the last days.

A. "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, **until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, 'There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob ...** As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes" (vs. 25-28). (Emphasis added).

B. Paul's final promise that Israel shall be **saved by a deliverer** which would come out of Zion **was a prophecy of the prophet Joseph Smith.**

1. We can sense how encouraging Zenos' allegory must have been to Joseph when he translated it, not long after he began translating the Book of Mormon.

C. In fact, the Book of Mormon parable should give encouragement to us --- God's final servants who are called upon to help bring in the final branches before the final burning. **For us, this should be the most significant point of the parable!**

1. Zenos gives all us laborers, though few, a call to join this work in Jacob 5:61-77. This is the highlight of the text and should be read and reread.

2. And we should be sobered with his words:

“And when the time cometh that evil fruit shall again come into my vineyard, then will I cause the 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. And then cometh the season and the end; and my vineyard will I cause to be burned with fire” (v. 77).

3. Seeing what we are seeing in the world, can we not recognize that we in essence hold the sirens to warn others [not to take cover into their basements], but to exercise faith, repent, be baptized and be grafted into the Lord’s great protecting shelter?

IV. The Parable of the Tame and Wild Olive Tree is a masterful witness of the Lord’s love for all mankind.

A. When we understand the Parable, we understand it teaches God loves all His children, whether Israelite or non-Israelite.

B. By comparing the Lord to the master of a vineyard who labors with all his might (“But 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 stretched forth mine hand almost all the day long” (Jacob 5:47), we feel even more of God’s love.

C. Even more, He shows that He “weeps” at seeing man’s decay, and He shows us His Joy in seeing our good fruits.

D. We are shown through his eyes why there is a tendency for corruption among his children: Pride. First, pride that our heritage alone saves us, but surely all kinds of pride (Jacob 5:48).

E. Jacob did not leave his people pondering as to what the parable means.

1. He made it very clear that the Lord is talking to His children.

2. If the parable alone does not “circumcise” one’s heart, Jacob’s eloquent pleading after he explained it should.

“Cleave unto God as he cleaveth unto you...

“For behold, after ye have been nourished by the good word of God all the day long, will ye bring forth evil fruit?

O be wise; what can I say more?” (Jacob 6:5, 7, 12).

V. On the other hand, Sherem is a prime example of how not to be wise.

A. For immediately after we read Jacob’s loving and powerful plea, we then read of Sherem. He denies Christ and His salvation and demands a sign, saying no man can “tell of things to come.”

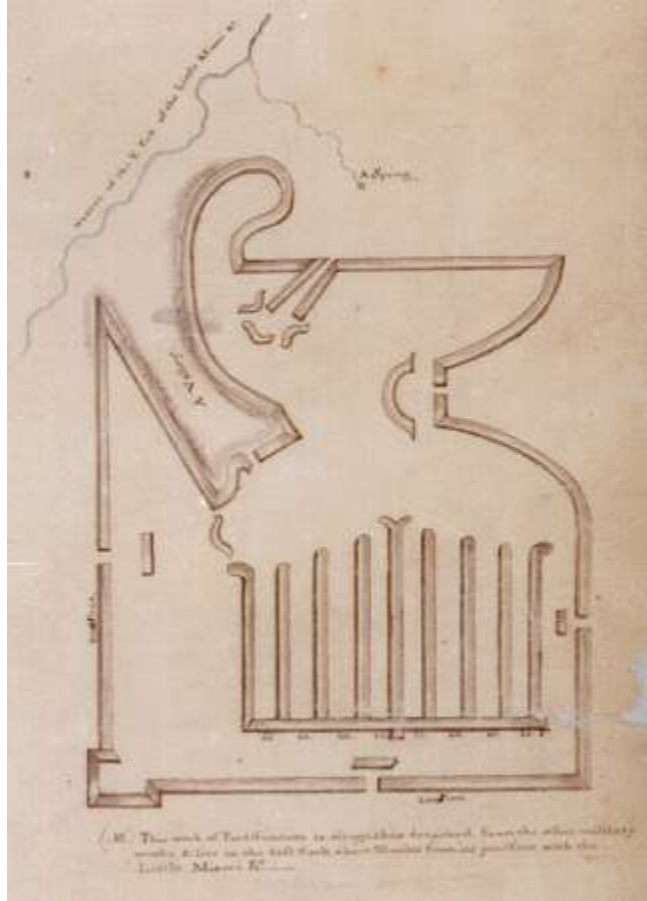
B. Sherem received his sign, the sign of his own collapse (7:15). In sorrow he gained wisdom through pain of experience and he died testifying, “... I have lied unto God; for I denied the Christ, ... and [the scriptures] truly testify of him” (7:19).

VI. Marvelously, the Book of Mormon helps fulfill its own prophecy.

A. When Europeans came to the United States, many found, and were fond of citing, evidences that the Native Americans were a “broken away” group of Israelites, just as the Book of Mormon would later verify.

1. Such evidences have been found through all parts of the Americas.

2. Perhaps the most concrete connection was an ancient earthwork with definite Israelite features appearing in the surveys of E.G. Squier and E.N. Davis, in *Ancient Monuments of the*



Mississippi Valley, p. 95, shown here.

3. When one looks at this earthwork one clearly sees it was constructed like a Middle Eastern olive oil lamp, and that inside it was an additional shape like a menorah. Some can find other significant symbolism.

4. For some bizarre reason, this earthwork was destroyed. But its presence cannot be denied due to the publication of its survey by the Smithsonian in 1848.

B. Because of the powerful testimony of the Book of Mormon [that inhabitants of these lands were indeed descendants of Israel], a great many of them have, through the generations, been grafted back into the Lord's "Olive Tree." They have been grafted back into a Latter-day Israel which fulfills all the Biblical prophecies of its re-emergence, and which bears all the evidences that it truly comes from God.

1. Its foundational source is still the original revelatory basis of Israel --- the Bible.

2. But it also grafts in the confirming records of those Israelite Branches once broken off.

3. It is a Temple Centered Israel --- one of the greatest signs that the Lord is present among them.

4. It is a great and real force, indeed the greatest force, which is actively seeking both scattered Israel and believing Gentile from throughout the world.

5. And it is preparing any who will listen to survive the "Final Burning," just as this prophecy and so many other scriptures foretell.