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# THE BOOK OF JACOB

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Jacob is the older of Lehi's two sons born during the eight years of journeying in the wilderness (see 1 Nephi 18:7). He is Nephi's younger brother and would be in the neighborhood of forty-five to fifty years old at this point. In chapter one, Jacob will talk to us about the commandment Nephi gave him to take over the small plates of Nephi and to engrave a few of his own things on them. Nephi's death is recorded by Jacob, also in chapter one.

Jacob will give some powerful messages, not the least of which will concern the growing practice of plural marriage among his people (chapter 2).

Perhaps the most famous chapter of Jacob is chapter 5 which is the allegory of the tame olive tree and the wild olive trees. We will spend considerable time on this chapter.

Jacob has seen the Savior (2 Nephi 11:3) and has been well schooled in the gospel by Nephi. He is kind and gentle and it bothers him to have to speak bluntly and boldly to his

people in order to wake them up to the reality that they are going into apostasy (see chapter two). We are greatly blessed to have these inspired teachings of Jacob and we can see that Mormon selected them for us (Words of Mormon 1:3–8) as he was inspired to include the small plates of Nephi in the plates which Moroni would later bury in the stone box in the Hill Cumorah.

## JACOB 1

In this chapter, Jacob will introduce himself to us and will explain some differences between the large plates and the small plates. He will redefine the terms "Lamanites" and "Nephites" and then give a little background to the sermon he delivered to his people in the temple.

1 FOR behold, it came to pass that fifty and five years had passed away from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem [*so it is now a little over 540 years before Christ*]; wherefore, Nephi gave me, Jacob, a commandment concerning the small plates [*the small plates of Nephi*], upon which these things are engraven.

For more information about the various sets of plates referred to in the Book of Mormon, see “A Brief Explanation About The Book Of Mormon” in the introductory pages to your Book of Mormon.

2 And he gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these plates [*the small plates*] a few of the things which I considered to be most precious; that I should not touch, save it were lightly, concerning the history of this people which are called the people of Nephi.

3 For he said that the history of his people should be engraven upon his other plates [*the large plates of Nephi*], and that I should preserve these plates and hand them down unto my seed, from generation to generation.

4 And if there were preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying, that I should engraven the heads [*main points*] of them upon these plates [*the small plates*], and touch upon them as much as it were possible, for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of our people.

5 For because of faith and great anxiety, it truly had been made manifest unto us concerning our people, what things should happen unto them.

6 And we also had many revelations, and the spirit of much prophecy; wherefore, we knew of Christ and his kingdom, which should come.

7 Wherefore we labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God, that they might enter into his rest [*exaltation in the celestial kingdom; see D&C 84:24*], lest by any means he should swear in his wrath they should not enter in, as in the provocation [*the “provoking of God,” in other words, the forty years the children of Israel spent in the wilderness because they provoked God to anger*] in the days of temptation while the children of Israel were in the wilderness.

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 [*do whatever it takes to follow Him*] and bear the shame of the world; wherefore, I, Jacob, take it upon me to fulfil the commandment of my brother Nephi.

Next, Jacob talks briefly about the transition of power among

his people, as far as their kings were concerned. Because the people loved Nephi so much, each of their succeeding kings was called Nephi (verse 11).

9 Now Nephi began to be old, and he saw that he must soon die; wherefore, he anointed a man to be a king and a ruler over his people now, according to the reigns of the kings.

10 The people having loved Nephi exceedingly, he having been a great protector for them, having wielded the sword of Laban in their defence, and having labored in all his days for their welfare—

11 Wherefore, the people were desirous to retain in remembrance his name. And whoso should reign in his stead were called by the people, second Nephi, third Nephi, and so forth, according to the reigns of the kings; and thus they were called by the people, let them be of whatever name they would.

12 And it came to pass that Nephi died.

Next, as stated above, Jacob redefines the terms “Lamanites” and “Nephites.” It is important that we keep these new definitions in mind as we continue our Book of Mormon study. We will use **bold** to emphasize this

point. Sometimes, in your scripture marking, you may wish to underline or highlight just a few words or phrases within a verse or set of verses, such that the underlined portion becomes a note in and of itself. This is what would happen if you were to underline the bolded portion of verse 14. You could even put a box around the words “Lamanite” and “Nephite,” which would further clarify at a glance.

13 Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites.

14 But I, Jacob, shall not **hereafter** distinguish them by these names, but **I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi, and those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites**, or the people of Nephi, according to the reigns of the kings.

Next, Jacob leads up to the serious problem which is growing among his people wherein men are beginning to take plural wives, against the commandment of the Lord. They were under the same rules we are today, as far as polygamy was concerned (see Jacob 2:34 and 3:5). We will say a bit more about this in a few moments. We will con-

tinue to use **bold** occasionally for emphasis and for teaching purposes. As we continue now, we will see once again what we called the Big Three sins as we commented on 1 Nephi 13:7–9. These Big Three are well-used by Satan still today. They are:

1. Sexual immorality
2. Materialism
3. Pride

15 And now it came to pass that **the people of Nephi**, under the reign of the second king, **began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices, such as like unto David of old desiring many wives and concubines, and also Solomon, his son** [*sexual immorality*].

16 Yea, and they also began to search much gold and silver, and began to be lifted up somewhat in pride [*materialism and pride*].

Next, Jacob tells us that his sermon to his people was designed to alert them to these three major tools of the devil.

17 Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord.

18 For I, Jacob, and my brother

Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi.

The terms “priests” and “teachers” as used here refer not to the Aaronic Priesthood, rather, to responsibilities within the Melchizedek Priesthood. Lehi and his descendants functioned by virtue of the Melchizedek Priesthood. The Aaronic Priesthood was not set up among the Nephites until the Savior’s ministry to them as recorded in Third Nephi. Joseph Fielding Smith explained this as follows:

“The Nephites were descendants of Joseph. Lehi discovered this when reading the brass plates. He was a descendant of Manasseh, and Ishmael, who accompanied him with his family, was of the tribe of Ephraim (Alma 10:3)” (Smith, *Improvement Era*, 8:781; *Journal of Discourses*, 23:184).

“Therefore there were no Levites who accompanied Lehi to the Western Hemisphere. Under these conditions **the Nephites officiated by virtue of the Melchizedek Priesthood from the days of Lehi to the days of the appearance of our Savior among them**. It is true that Nephi ‘consecrated Jacob and Joseph’ that they should be priests and teachers over the land of the Nephites, but the fact that plural terms *priests and teachers* were used indicates that this was not a reference to the definite office in the

priesthood in either case, but it was a general assignment to teach, direct, and admonish the people. Otherwise the terms *priest and teacher* would have been given, in the singular. Additional light is thrown on this appointment showing that these two brothers of Nephi held the Melchizedek Priesthood, in the sixth chapter, second verse of 2 Nephi, where Jacob makes this explanation regarding the priesthood which he and Joseph held: ‘Behold, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, having been called of God, and ordained *after the manner of his holy order*, and having been consecrated by my brother Nephi, unto whom ye look as a king or a protector, and on whom ye depend for safety, behold ye know that I have spoken unto you exceeding many things.’

“This seems to be a confirmation of the ordinations that he and his brother Joseph received in the Melchizedek Priesthood. All through the Book of Mormon we find references to the Nephites officiating by virtue of the Higher Priesthood (Melchizedek Priesthood) after the holy order.” (Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:124)

19 And we did magnify our office unto the Lord [*we fulfilled the responsibilities of our offices and callings*], taking upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own

heads [*considering that we were responsible for our people’s sins*] if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments [*that we would not be held accountable for their sins*]; otherwise their blood would come upon our garments, and we would not be found spotless at the last day [*on Judgment Day*].

## JACOB 2

In this chapter, Jacob will go to the temple and teach his people. He will deal with three major topics, namely, materialism, pride, and sexual immorality. As he speaks about immorality, he will deal with the topic of plural marriage.

1 THE words which Jacob, the brother of Nephi, spake unto the people of Nephi, after the death of Nephi:

2 Now, my beloved brethren, I, Jacob, according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office [*to fulfill my calling*] with soberness, and that I might rid my garments of your sins [*not be responsible for your sins*], I come up into the temple this day that I might

declare unto you the word of God.

Preparing to deliver this particular sermon has been very hard on Jacob. He is a kind, tender man and does not like to place burdens on people nor hurt their feelings. He is like our modern prophets.

3 And ye yourselves know that I have hitherto [*up to now*] been diligent in the office of my calling; but I this day am weighed down with much more desire and anxiety for the welfare of your souls than I have hitherto been. [*He is really worried about them.*]

4 For behold, as yet, ye have been obedient unto the word of the Lord, which I have given unto you.

As a prophet, Jacob can discern what is in the minds and thoughts of his people by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is his stewardship to do so. Our prophets do the same and we see it, especially as they address us at the General Conferences of the Church.

5 But behold, hearken ye unto me, and know that **by the help of the all-powerful Creator of heaven and earth I can tell you concerning your thoughts**, how that ye are beginning to **labor in sin**, which sin appeareth very

abominable unto me, yea, and abominable unto God.

The phrase “labor in sin” as used in verse 5, above, as a very interesting and insightful term. Sin creates much more stress and work (labor) than righteousness does. This is true both on an individual basis as well as on a national level.

For instance, righteousness promotes peace and thus the labors and productivity of the people go to building up of the standard of living for everyone. On the other hand, wickedness requires the formation and financing of police, armies, self-defense, locks, security systems, guards, and so forth. In summary, righteousness builds, produces and creates prosperity, while wickedness consumes prosperity.

6 Yea, it grieveth my soul and causeth me to shrink with shame before the presence of my Maker, that I must testify unto you concerning the wickedness of your hearts. [*Jacob is ashamed of his people's behaviors.*]

7 And also it grieveth me that I must use so much boldness of speech concerning you, before your wives and your children, many of whose feelings are exceedingly tender and chaste and delicate before God, which thing is pleasing unto God;

It is weighing heavily upon

Jacob's heart that many righteous members have come to the meeting expecting to be cheered up and encouraged, to have their day brightened by listening to their prophet. But it is not going to happen.

8 And it supposeth me that they have come up hither to hear the pleasing word of God, yea, the word which healeth the wounded soul.

9 Wherefore, it burdeneth [*weighs down*] my soul that I should be constrained, because of the strict commandment which I have received from God, to admonish [*teach and warn*] you according to your crimes, to enlarge the wounds of those who are already wounded [*by your sins*], instead of consoling and healing their wounds; and those who have not been wounded, instead of feasting upon the pleasing word of God have daggers placed to pierce their souls and wound their delicate minds.

10 But, notwithstanding [*in spite of*] the greatness of the task, I must do according to the strict commands of God, and tell you concerning your wickedness and abominations [*extremely serious sins*], in the presence of the pure in heart, and the broken heart, and under the glance of the piercing eye of the Almighty God.

11 Wherefore, I must tell you the truth according to the plainness of the word of God. For behold, as I inquired of the Lord, thus came the word unto me, saying: Jacob, get thou up into the temple on the morrow, and declare the word which I shall give thee unto this people.

First, Jacob teaches and warns them about materialism, in other words, making money and having things, personal wealth and possessions, a top priority in their lives. This leads to pride. We will continue to use **bold** for emphasis.

12 And now behold, my brethren, this is the word which I declare unto you, that many of you have begun to search for gold, and for silver, and for all manner of precious ores, in the which this land, which is a land of promise unto you and to your seed, doth abound most plentifully. [*There is lots of wealth available in this land.*]

13 And the hand of providence [*God*] hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren **ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts**, and wear stiff necks [*you won't bow your heads in humil-*

ity] and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel [*clothing*], and persecute your brethren because ye suppose that ye are better than they.

14 And now, my brethren, do ye suppose that God justifieth [*excuses*] you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemneth you, and if ye persist in these things his judgments [*punishments*] must speedily come unto you.

15 O that he would show you that he can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye he can smite you to the dust!

16 O that he would rid you from this iniquity [*wickedness*] and abomination. And, O that ye would listen unto the word of his commands, and **let not this pride of your hearts destroy your souls!**

Next, Jacob teaches his people a simple method of overcoming pride and materialism.

17 **Think of your brethren like unto yourselves**, and be familiar [*generous*] with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

Some people think that wealth itself is evil. This is not the case. It is how individuals handle wealth and what goes on

in their minds and hearts that counts. What Jacob says next is very important and quite well known among members of the Church today.

18 But **before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.**

19 And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye **will seek them for the intent to do good**—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted. [*In other words, if you remain loyal and faithful to God, and if you gain wealth, it will not ruin you because you will keep things in proper perspective.*]

20 And now, my brethren, I have spoken unto you concerning **pride**; and those of you which have afflicted your neighbor, and persecuted him because ye were proud in your hearts, of the things which God hath given you, what say ye of it?

21 Do ye not suppose that such things are abominable unto him who created all flesh? And **the one being is as precious in his sight as the other.** And all flesh is of the dust; and for the self-same end [*purpose*] hath he created them, that they should keep



his commandments and glorify him forever.

Jacob wishes that he could end his sermon at this point and let his people go home. It would be a great relief to him to do so. But one of the responsibilities of a leader is to deliver the word of the Lord to his people without diluting it. In the next verses, Jacob expresses this and then delivers the rest of the message.

22 And now I make an end of speaking unto you concerning this pride. And **were it not that I must speak unto you concerning a grosser crime, my heart would rejoice exceedingly because of you.**

23 But the word of God burdens me because of your grosser crimes. For behold, thus saith the Lord: This people begin to wax in iniquity; they understand not the scriptures, for they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms [*sexual immorality*], because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son.

Jacob's people have obviously read in the brass plates about David and Solomon and are using this as an excuse to violate the commandment which the Lord gave Lehi (see Jacob 3:5) that his people should not take up the practice of plu-

ral marriage which was still commonly practiced in Old Testament lands when they left Jerusalem in 600 B.C.

First, Jacob tells his people that they must not use David and Solomon as role models, because they both lost their souls as this practice got out of hand with them. For instance, David had Bathsheba's husband killed intentionally in battle so he could marry her as a plural wife after he found out she was expecting their child. Thus, David tried to cover up adultery with murder. As a result, David lost his exaltation (see D&C 132:39). David was not a good example for Jacob's people to follow at this stage of his life.

As for Solomon, 1 Kings 11:3 informs us that he had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (second class wives), and the Bible goes on to record that Solomon began worshiping idols, which was pleasing to many of his pagan wives. Thus, Solomon also apostatized from God because of his abuse of plural marriage. He too was not a good example for Jacob's people to follow.

No wonder Jacob told his people the following:

24 Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord.

25 Wherefore, thus saith the

Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph [*from the descendants of Joseph who was sold into Egypt*].

26 Wherefore, I the Lord God will not suffer [*allow*] that this people shall do like unto them of old.

There are many rumors and false notions among members and non-members alike regarding the practice of plural marriage in the early days of the Church. Many try to come up with explanations of why the Lord commanded plural marriage. One of the most common is the notion that so many of the men were killed off by mobs, etc. that plural marriage was required for the remaining women to have a husband. Recent research has shown this not to be the case to any significant degree.

As Jacob continues, he will give us the reason many of the early members of the Church practiced plural marriage. It is simple. The Lord commanded it.

You may wish to put a box around verses 27 and 30, next, and tie them together with a line. They constitute the word of the Lord regarding plural marriage.

Just a quick explanation about the word “polygamy,” which is commonly used to refer to plural marriage. Technically, polygamy means having plural husbands or plural wives. Therefore, “plural wives” is a better term for us to use.

Now on to the rules for plural marriage, as given by the Lord. We will use **bold** for emphasis.

27 Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: **For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none;**

28 For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts.

29 Wherefore, this people shall keep my commandments, saith the Lord of Hosts, or cursed be the land for their sakes.

30 For **if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people [*to practice plural marriage*]; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things [*the rule given in verse 27*].**

“These things” in verse 30, above, refer to verse 27. In fact, you may wish to draw an arrow from “these things” back up

to verse 27 in your own scriptures.

A common question which comes up in classes is, “Will I be required to practice plural marriage if I attain exaltation?” The answer is “No.” Bruce R. McConkie gives the answer as follows (**bold** added to point out the answer):

“From such fragmentary scriptural records as are now available, we learn that the Lord did command some of his ancient saints to practice plural marriage. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—among others (D&C 132)—conformed to this ennobling and exalting principle; the whole history of ancient Israel was one in which plurality of wives was a divinely accepted and approved order of matrimony. Those who entered this order at the Lord’s command, and who kept the laws and conditions appertaining to it, have gained for themselves eternal exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world.

“In the early days of this dispensation, as part of the promised restitution of all things, the Lord revealed the principle of plural marriage to the Prophet. Later the Prophet and leading brethren were commanded to enter into the practice, which they did in all virtue and purity of heart despite the consequent animosity and prejudices of worldly people. After Brigham Young led the saints to the Salt Lake Valley, plural marriage

was openly taught and practiced until the year 1890. At that time conditions were such that the Lord by revelation withdrew the command to continue the practice, and President Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto directing that it cease (Woodruff, *Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, pp. 213–18).

“Obviously the holy practice will commence again after the Second Coming of the Son of Man and the ushering in of the Millennium (Isaiah 4).

**“Plural marriage is not essential to salvation or exaltation. Nephi and his people were denied the power to have more than one wife and yet they could gain every blessing in eternity that the Lord ever offered to any people.** In our day, the Lord summarized by revelation the whole doctrine of exaltation and predicated it upon the marriage of one man to one woman (D&C 132:1–28). Thereafter he added the principles relative to plurality of wives with the express stipulation that any such marriages would be valid only if authorized by the President of the Church (D&C 132:7, 29–66).

“All who pretend or assume to engage in plural marriage in this day, when the one holding the keys has withdrawn the power by which they are performed, are guilty of gross wickedness” (McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 578).

31 For behold, I, the Lord, have seen the sorrow, and heard the mourning of the daughters of my people in the land of Jerusalem, yea, and in all the lands of my people, because of the wickedness and abominations of their husbands.

32 And I will not suffer [*allow*], saith the Lord of Hosts, that the cries of the fair daughters of this people, which I have led out of the land of Jerusalem, shall come up unto me against the men of my people, saith the Lord of Hosts.

33 For they shall not lead away captive the daughters of my people because of their tenderness, save I shall visit them with a sore curse, even unto destruction; for they shall not commit whoredoms, like unto them of old, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Next, Jacob reminds the men among his people that they already know the commandments of the Lord to them on this topic. Therefore, they are accountable for going against God's law on this matter.

34 And now behold, my brethren, **ye know that these commandments were given to our father, Lehi**; wherefore, ye have known them before; and **ye have come unto great condemnation**; for ye have done these things which

ye ought not to have done.

35 Behold, ye have done greater iniquities than the Lamanites, our brethren. Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; and the sobbings of their hearts ascend up to God against you. And because of the strictness of the word of God, which cometh down against you, many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds.

## JACOB 3

Next, Jacob gives encouragement to those of his people who have not broken these commandments of God.

1 BUT behold, I, Jacob, would speak unto you that are pure in heart. Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction.

2 O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever.

One of the most important messages of the gospel is the effectiveness of the Atonement of Christ. Jacob will now warn, invite and remind the wicked among his people to repent. It is not too late.

3 But, wo, wo, unto you that are not pure in heart, that are filthy this day before God; for **except ye repent** the land is cursed for your sakes [*unless you repent, you will be destroyed*]; and the Lamanites, which are not filthy like unto you, nevertheless they are cursed with a sore cursing [*because they have gone astray from the gospel*], shall scourge you even unto destruction.

4 And the time speedily cometh, that except ye [*the Nephites*] repent they shall possess the land of your inheritance, and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you. [*He did have Mosiah I lead the righteous out of the land of Nephi to Zarahemla; see Omni 1:12–15.*]

5 Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness and the cursing which hath come upon their skins, are more righteous than you; for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord, which was given unto our father—that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should

have none, and there should not be whoredoms committed among them.

6 And now, this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore, because of this observance, in keeping this commandment, the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people. [*We are watching the fulfilling of this prophecy today.*]

7 Behold, their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands; and their husbands and their wives love their children; and their unbelief and their hatred towards you is because of the iniquity of their fathers; wherefore, how much better are you than they, in the sight of your great Creator?

8 O my brethren, I fear that unless ye shall repent of your sins that their skins will be whiter than yours, when ye shall be brought with them before the throne of God. [*They will be more pure and clean on Judgment Day than you.*]

The illicit practice of plural marriage for the gratification of lustful desires among the Nephites at the time of Jacob's address to his people was a form of severe hypocrisy. They looked down at the Lamanites, yet they were guilty of gross sin themselves. Jacob explains this next.

9 Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them because of the darkness of their skins; neither shall ye revile against them because of their filthiness; but ye shall remember your own filthiness, and remember that their filthiness came because of their fathers [*unrighteous traditions*].

10 Wherefore, ye shall remember your children, how that ye have grieved their hearts because of the example that ye have set before them; and also, remember that ye may, because of your filthiness, bring your children unto destruction, and **their sins be heaped upon your heads at the last day.**

Just a quick word about the phrase “bring your children unto destruction” in verse 10, above. Remember that God is completely fair to all people, including children who are given bad examples, and thus grow up away from the gospel. If they do not get a fair chance in this life, such children will have a fair chance in the spirit world (see D&C 137:7–8; see also D&C 50:7 where the Lord tells us that those who are deceived by hypocrites “shall be reclaimed.” This doctrine is very comforting.

Next, Jacob gives one of the most eloquent calls to repentance found anywhere.

11 O my brethren, hearken unto my words; arouse the faculties of your souls [*wake up and think!*]; shake yourselves that ye may awake from the slumber of death [*death of your spirituality*]; and loose yourselves from the pains of hell that ye may not become angels to the devil, to be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone which is the second death [*being kept out of God’s presence forever*].

12 And now I, Jacob, spake many more things unto the people of Nephi, warning them against fornication and lasciviousness [*all forms of sexual immorality*], and every kind of sin, telling them the awful consequences of them.

13 And a hundredth part of the proceedings of this people, which now began to be numerous, cannot be written upon these plates [*the small plates of Nephi*]; but many of their proceedings are written upon the larger plates [*the large plates of Nephi*], and their wars, and their contentions, and the reigns of their kings.

14 These plates [*this section of the small plates of Nephi*] are called the plates of Jacob, and they were made by the hand of Nephi. And I make an end of speaking these words.

## JACOB 4

Engraving plates was a very painstaking task and next, Jacob takes a moment to call our attention to this.

1 NOW behold, it came to pass that I, Jacob, having ministered much unto my people in word (and I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates), and we know that the things which we write upon plates must remain [*will be permanent*];

2 But whatsoever things we write upon anything [*such as animal skins or whatever*] save [*except*] it be upon plates [*metal plates*] must [*will*] perish and vanish away; but we can write a few words upon plates, which will give our children, and also our beloved brethren, a small degree of knowledge concerning us, or concerning their fathers—

3 Now in this thing we do rejoice; and we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates, hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them with thankful hearts, and look upon them that they may learn with joy and not with sorrow, neither with contempt, concerning their first parents [*concerning us, their ancestors*].

Next, Jacob bears testimony to his descendants down through the ages.

4 For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ, and we had a hope [*an assurance; see Alma 58:11*] of his glory many hundred years before his coming; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but also all the holy prophets which were before us.

Next, Jacob explains the purpose of the law of Moses.

5 Behold, **they believed in Christ** and worshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his name. And for this intent we keep **the law of Moses**, it **pointing our souls to him**; and for this cause it [*the proper use of the law of Moses*] is sanctified unto us for righteousness, even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac, which is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son. [*Abraham was symbolic of the Father, and Isaac was symbolic of the sacrificing of the Son.*]

Next, Jacob teaches us a great lesson in the value of scripture study. Watch as he teaches the results of so doing.

6 Wherefore [*this is why*], **we search the prophets** [*the scriptures*], and **we have many revelations** and the spirit of prophecy; and having all these witnesses **we obtain a hope**, and **our faith becometh unshaken**, insomuch that we truly can command in the name of Jesus and the very trees obey us, or the mountains, or the waves of the sea.

7 Nevertheless, the Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions [*willingness to work with people who are so much less capable than He*] unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.

8 Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him [*it is impossible for us to comprehend God at this point; but we will someday; compare with D&C 88:49*]; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God.

9 For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created by the power of his word. Wherefore, if God being able to

speak and the world was, and to speak and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or the workmanship of his hands [*us*] upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure?

Next is another famous quote among members of the Church. It reminds us to avoid telling the Lord how to run things, rather to listen carefully to Him so that we learn.

10 Wherefore, brethren, **seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand**. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works.

11 Wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled [*become at peace*] unto him [*the Father*] through the atonement of Christ, his Only Begotten Son, and ye may obtain a resurrection [*a celestial resurrection; see the next lines*], according to the power of the resurrection which is in Christ, and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ [*the best results of Christ's Atonement, namely, celestial*] unto God [*the Father*], having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in him [*Christ*] before he manifesteth himself in the flesh.



The last phrase of verse 11, above, is very significant doctrinally. It shows us that Christ's Atonement worked even before it was actually performed. Thus, Jacob's people could be forgiven of sins even though the Savior had not yet come to earth to serve His atoning mission.

12 And now, beloved, marvel not that I tell you these things; for why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him, as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?

As mentioned previously, the word "prophesy" has at least two meanings in the context of the scriptures. For one thing, it means to foretell the future. Another definition is "teach." Both definitions seem to apply to verse 13, next.

13 Behold, my brethren, he that prophesieth, let him prophesy to the understanding of men [*so that people can understand what you are saying*]; for the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not [*truth is simple*]. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are, and of things as they really will be; wherefore [*this is why*], **these things are manifested unto us plainly**, for the salvation of our souls. But behold, we are not

witnesses alone in these things; for God also spake them unto prophets of old.

You have probably noticed that many of Jacob's teachings are rather well known among Church members. Next, we see a rather famous statement, "Don't look beyond the mark." In other words, don't miss the obvious. Watch as Jacob teaches it.

14 But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness [*they loved to complicate things*], and killed the prophets, and sought for things that they could not understand [*this is typical of many teachers of philosophy today*]. Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by **looking beyond the mark**, they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them [*allowed them to come up with*] many things which they cannot understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell spoke of "looking beyond the mark" as follows:

"In the Book of Mormon, Jacob speaks of ancient Judah as having rejected the words of its prophets because individuals

living then ‘despised the words of plainness’ and because they ‘sought for things that they could not understand’ (Jacob 4:14). Intellectual embroidery seems to have been preferred to the whole clothing of the gospel—the frills to the fabric. In fact, one can even surmise that complexity was preferred over plainness by some because in conceptual complexity there might somehow be escape, or excuse, for noncompliance and for failure. In any event, this incredible blindness which led to the rejection of those truths spoken by prophets and which prevented the recognition of Jesus for who he was, according to Jacob, came ‘by looking beyond the mark.’ Those who look beyond plainness, beyond the prophets, beyond Christ, and beyond his simple teachings waited in vain then, as they will wait in vain now. For only the gospel of Jesus Christ teaches us of things as they really are and as they really will be. There is more realism in the revelations than in reams of secular research, for secularism is congenitally shortsighted. Without revelation and its absolute anchors, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints would also follow the fads of the day, as some churches have done; but as Samuel Callan warned, the church that weds itself to the culture of the day will ‘be a widow within each succeeding age.’ This is but one of the marks of the ‘true and living’ Church: it is spared the fruits

of fadism” (Maxwell, “On Being a Light,” p. 1).

Pay close attention to what Jacob says in the next four verses. He will set the stage for Jacob, chapter five, in which the allegory of the tame and wild olive trees is given. The main point leading up to chapter five is, “How can the Jews (or any people, for that matter) who reject the Savior so completely, ever come back?” Jacob will pose this question specifically in verse 17.

15 And now I, Jacob, am led on by the Spirit unto prophesying; for I perceive by the workings of the Spirit which is in me, that by the stumbling of the Jews they will reject the stone [*Christ*] upon which they might build and have safe foundation.

16 But behold, according to the scriptures, this stone [*Christ*] shall become the great, and the last, and the only sure foundation, upon which the Jews can build.

17 And now, my beloved, **how is it possible that these** [*the Jews*], **after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it** [*can ever return to Christ*], that it may become the head of their corner [*become the “chief cornerstone” of their lives; compare with Ephesians 2:20*]?

In verse 18, next, Jacob confides in us that he is quite nervous about getting his point across in chapter five. There is a message for us in this. If we get too anxious or worried about what the Lord asks us to do, we can ruin our ability to listen to the Holy Ghost and we may not get the job done right. While many of us will get nervous about teaching or speaking, we would do well to have sufficient faith to calm us down so we can be effective instruments in the Lord's hand.

18 Behold, my beloved brethren, I will unfold this mystery [how the Jews can return to Christ] unto you; **if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit, and stumble because of my over anxiety for you.**

## JACOB 5

Jacob 5 is often referred to as "The Allegory of the Olive Tree." An allegory is a story or parable which symbolizes things in real life. The allegory comes from the writings of Zenos (see verse 1), a prophet whose writings are not found in the Bible.

Since this is such a significant chapter in the Book of Mormon, and since it is referred to so often, we will take the time to

give quite a bit of background which will help in understanding the various messages in this allegory. For instance, the "tame" olive tree is extremely significant as are the "branches" which are broken off from it.

Furthermore, as we actually get to studying the chapter itself, we will repeat the chapter twice, in order to point out that scriptural symbolism can be understood in several ways. It is said that scriptural symbolism is infinitely deep. In other words, through symbolism, the Lord can teach us many different things, depending on our need at the moment. It is important that we allow room for different interpretations of such scriptures. Otherwise, we may "miss the mark" ourselves, from one reading to the next.

First, we will get some background about olive trees, which are used extensively in this allegory. We will draw on the Institute of Religion *Book of Mormon Student Manual*, pp. 47–48 for this:

"The use of the olive tree as a symbol for the house of Israel is an excellent example of how God uses symbolism to teach his children gospel laws and principles. For centuries the olive tree has been associated with peace.

War and its grim attendants of destruction—rape of the land, siege, and death—were hardly conducive to the cultivation of olive orchards, that require many years of careful husbandry to bring into full production. When the dove returned to the ark, it carried an olive leaf in its beak, as though to symbolize that God was again at peace with the earth (see Genesis 8:11). The olive branch was used in ancient 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 its talons. The only true source of peace is Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. His peace comes through obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel. These laws and ordinances are given to the world through the house of Israel, symbolized by the olive tree. Someone once said that Israel was not chosen to be an uplifted people, but an uplifting people.

“There is further symbolic significance in the cultivation of an olive tree. 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 producing only a small, worthless fruit (Moldenke and 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 a branch from a tame olive tree 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 by itself; it requires grafting by the husbandman to bring it into production. Throughout its history Israel has demonstrated the remarkable aptness characterized by the symbol of the olive tree. When they gave themselves to their God for pruning and grafting the Israelites prospered and bore much fruit, but when they turned from Christ, the Master of the vineyard, and sought to become their own source of sustenance, they became wild and unfruitful.

“Two other characteristics of the olive tree further illustrate how it is an appropriate symbol for Israel. First, though requiring nearly fifteen years to come into

full production, an olive tree may produce fruit for centuries. Some trees now growing in the Holy Land have been producing fruit abundantly for at least four hundred years. The second amazing quality of the tree is that as it

finally grows old and begins to die, the roots send up a number of new green shoots that, if grafted and pruned, will mature into full-grown olive trees. The root of the tree will also send up shoots after the tree is cut down. 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 located in Israel today have come from trees that were ancient during Christ's mortal ministry. How can Israel be compared to an olive tree, which time and again seems to have been cut down and destroyed, yet, each time a new tree springs forth from the roots?

“Zenos was not the only prophet to use the olive tree as a symbol for the chosen people of God. Jeremiah, foreseeing the com-

ing destruction of the Jews by Babylonia, compared the covenant people to a green olive tree consumed by fire (see Jeremiah 11:16). The apostle Paul used a brief allegory almost identical to that of Zenos's to warn the Roman Christians against pride as they compared their favored position to that of the Jews (see Romans 11:16–24). In modern revelation, the Lord uses the parable of a vineyard and olive trees to show his will concerning the redemption of Zion (see D&C 101:43–58).

Having studied the symbolism of the olive tree itself, above, we will now draw upon the same student manual, page 48, to point out several individual elements or parts of the allegory which symbolize specific things.

“An allegory or a parable should not be pushed too far in an attempt to correlate every item precisely with some outside reality. However, certain major elements need to be defined if the allegory itself is to be understood. The following items seem important in Zenos's allegory:

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## KEY FEATURES OF ZENOS'S ALLEGORY

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

One major message of Jacob 5 is that the Lord keeps working with us individually and as peoples and nations. He has some successes with each of us and some failures. Nevertheless, He keeps working and doing all He can, without violating our agency, to bring us back to the Father, permanently. As we go through the Allegory the first time, we will emphasize this theme. We will occasionally use **bold** to point things out. We will give some possible interpretations. We will note that the Lord of the vineyard makes four specific visits to His vineyard as follows:

1. Verses 4–14
2. Verses 15–28
3. Verses 29–51
4. Verses 52–77

1 BEHOLD, my brethren, do ye not remember to have read the words of the prophet Zenos, which he spake unto the house of Israel [*the Lord's covenant people*], saying:

2 Hearken, O ye house of Israel, and hear the words of me, a prophet of the Lord.

3 For behold, thus saith the Lord, I will liken thee, O **house of Israel, like unto a tame olive-tree** [*the Lord's covenant people*], which

a man [*Jesus*] took and nourished in his vineyard [*the world*]; and it grew, and waxed old [*grew old*], and began to decay [*apostasy*].

4 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard [*Christ*] went forth, and he saw that his olive-tree [*the covenant people*] began to decay [*go into apostasy*]; and he said: I will prune it [*cut off the most wicked; cut out false doctrines, etc.*], and dig about it, and nourish it, that perhaps it may shoot forth young and tender branches, and it perish not.

5 And it came to pass that he pruned it, and digged about it, and nourished it according to his word [*as He had promised to do when He sent us here from premortality*].

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 top [*the majority of His people at that time*] thereof began to perish [*had fallen away from Him*]. [*One possible fulfillment among many of this could be the apostasy of ancient Israel. Another could be Lehi's group over the centuries.*]

7 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard [*Jesus*] saw it [*saw the apostasy*], and

he said unto his servant: It grieveth me that I should lose this tree; wherefore, go and pluck the branches from a wild olive-tree [*give the gospel to the Gentiles*], and bring them hither unto me; and we will pluck off those main branches which are beginning to wither away [*apostate Israel*], and we will cast them into the fire that they may be burned [*the punishments and destructions of God sent upon the wicked*].

In verse 8, the Lord seems to be scattering various groups of people and also gathering some of them, as He has done throughout history. Remember, this allegory is quoted to show how the Lord works to save His people.

8 And behold, saith the Lord of the vineyard [*Christ*], I take away many of these young and tender branches, and I will graft [*scatter*] them whithersoever I will; and it mattereth not that if it so be that the root [*covenants*] of this tree [*the tame olive tree; Israel*] will perish, I may preserve [*gather*] the fruit thereof unto myself; wherefore, I will take these young and tender branches, and I will graft them whithersoever I will [*scatter them throughout the world*].

9 Take thou the branches of the

wild olive-tree [*Gentiles*], and graft them in, in the stead thereof [*in place of Israel*]; and these which I have plucked off I will cast into the fire and burn them, that they may not cumber [*clutter*] 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 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 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 gospel*].

13 And these will I place in the nethermost [*farthest away*] part of my vineyard, whithersoever I will, it mattereth not unto thee [*I know what I'm doing*]; and I do it that I may preserve unto myself the natural branches of the tree; and also, that I may lay up fruit thereof against the season [*I want to bring people home*]



to Me forever], 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 branches of the tame olive-tree [*the scattering of Israel*] in the nethermost parts of the vineyard, some in one and some in another, according to his will and pleasure.

You may have been “scattered” by the Lord in order to get you where He needs you to do His work.

15 And it came to pass that a long time passed away, and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: **Come, let us go down into the vineyard**, that we may labor in the vineyard. [*The second visit referred to at the beginning of the chapter. A major message here is that the Lord constantly sends His prophets and missionaries to the world to give them chance after chance to hear and accept the gospel.*]

16 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard [*the Savior is much involved with us here*], 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 [*Gentiles*] had been grafted; and it had sprung forth and begun to bear fruit [*many of them accepted and lived the gospel*]. And he beheld that it was good; and **the fruit thereof was like unto the natural fruit** [*there is no difference between Israelite members of the Church and Gentile members of the Church, if they keep their covenants made at baptism, etc.*].

18 And he said unto the servant: Behold, the branches of the wild tree have taken hold of the moisture of the root thereof, that the root [*gospel covenants*] thereof hath brought forth much strength; and because of the much strength of the root thereof the wild branches have brought forth tame fruit [*the Gentiles are solid members of the Church*]. Now, **if we had not grafted in these branches, the tree thereof would have perished**. [*One possible meaning of this bolded phrase is that the European converts strengthened the early 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 [*I will bring many home to the Father*].

19 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Come, let us go to the nethermost part of the vineyard, and behold if [*see if*] the natural branches [*the people of Israel whom we have scattered*] 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 first that it had 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. [*Much success, with many souls brought home to heaven.*]

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.

Verse 22, above, is a reminder that there are wonderful Saints who live in very poor circumstances.

23 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Look hither; behold I have planted **another branch** [*another group*] of the tree also; and thou knowest that this **spot of ground was poorer than the first**. 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 branch** also, which I have planted; behold that I have nourished it also, and it hath brought forth fruit.

One important message from these verses is that the Lord has much success with many people, no matter where they are throughout the world. This is very encouraging.

Verse 25, next, seems to fit Lehi's group after they landed in America (see verses 43–45).

25 And he said unto the servant: Look hither and behold the last. Behold, this have I **planted in a good spot of ground**; and I have nourished it this long time, and **only a part of the tree hath brought forth tame fruit, and the other part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit** [*apostasy*]; behold, I have nourished this tree like unto the others [*they have all been treated fairly and had opportunities to accept the gospel*].

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 fruit, and cast them into the fire.

27 But behold, the servant said unto him: Let us prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it a little 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.

Next, we have the third visit

mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. There seems to be a feeling of urgency because time is running out.

29 And it came to pass that a long time had passed away, and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his 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 end soon cometh**; wherefore, I must lay up fruit against the season, unto mine own self.

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 [*Israel*] whose natural branches had been broken off [*scattered*], and the wild branches had been grafted in; and behold **all sorts of fruit did cumber** [*clutter*] **the tree.** [*Perhaps the universal apostasy with all kinds of churches and all kinds of false doctrines, creeds, and practices.*]

31 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard did taste of the fruit [*judged the products of false churches*], every sort according to its number. And the Lord of the vineyard said: Behold, this long time have we nourished this tree [*from the beginning we have worked*

*patiently with Israel*], and I have laid up unto myself against the season much fruit [*and we have had much success*].

32 But behold, this time [*the great apostasy?*] it hath brought forth much fruit, and there is none of it which is good. And behold, there are all kinds of bad fruit [*there are all kinds of ways to be wicked*]; 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; 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.

36 Nevertheless, I know that the roots are good, 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.

37 But behold, **the wild branches have grown and have overrun 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; and it will soon become ripened [*in wickedness*], that it may be cast into the fire, except we should do something for it to preserve it.

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. [*Let's go see what is happening in the far away parts of the earth.*]

39 And it came to pass that they went down into the nethermost parts of the vineyard [*possibly America among the ancient Lamanites*]. And it came to pass that they beheld that the fruit of the natural branches had become corrupt also; yea, the first and the second and also the last; and they had all become corrupt.

40 And the wild fruit [*apostasy*] of the last had overcome that part of the tree [*the Nephites?*] which brought forth good fruit, even that the branch had withered away and died [*the Church had died out completely*].

41 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard wept, and said unto the servant: What could I have done more for my vineyard?

42 Behold, I knew that all the fruit of the vineyard, save it were these, had become 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 hewn down and cast into the fire.

43 And behold this last [*see verse 25*], whose branch hath withered away, I did plant in a 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 [*the Jaredites?*] which cumbered [*cluttered with their wickedness*] this spot of ground, that I might plant this tree [*Lehi?*] in the stead thereof.

45 And thou beheldest that a part

thereof [*the Nephites?*] brought forth good fruit, and a part thereof [*the Lamanites?*] brought forth wild fruit; and because I plucked not the branches thereof and cast them into the fire, behold, they [*the Lamanites?*] have overcome the good branch [*the Nephites?*] that it hath withered away.

46 And now, behold, notwithstanding [*in spite of*] all the care which we have taken of my vineyard [*the earth*], the trees thereof have become corrupted, that they bring forth no good 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 [*the wicked*], and they are of no worth but to be hewn down and cast into the fire; and it grieveth me that I should lose them.

47 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, and the 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?**

The question at the end of verse 47 is an important one. We will **bold** the answer in verse 48.

48 And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: **Is it not the loftiness** [*pride*] of thy vineyard—**have not the branches thereof overcome the roots** [*people are shallow in living the gospel*] 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** [*perhaps meaning not following the Brethren*]. Behold, I say, is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have become corrupted?

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 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.

Beginning with verse 52, we see the gathering of Israel in the last days.

52 Wherefore, **let us take of the branches of these which I have planted in the nethermost parts of my vineyard**, and let us **graft them into the tree from whence they came**; and let us pluck from the tree those branches whose fruit is most bitter, and graft in the natural branches of the tree in the stead thereof.

As stated in verse 52, above, converts do not suddenly become “life long members.” It takes time and effort to change old habits and break away from inappropriate traditions. But, with patience, and continued help from the Holy Ghost, it happens over time.

53 And this will I do that the tree may not perish, that, perhaps, I may preserve unto myself the roots thereof for mine own purpose.

54 And, behold, the roots of the natural branches of the tree which I planted whithersoever I would are yet alive; wherefore, that I may preserve them also for mine own purpose, I will take

of the branches of this tree, and I will graft them in unto them. Yea, I will graft in unto them the branches of their mother tree, that I may preserve the roots [*the original covenants, doctrines, etc.*] also unto mine own self, that when they shall be sufficiently strong perhaps they may bring forth good fruit unto me, and I may yet have glory in the fruit of my vineyard.

55 And it came to pass that they took from the natural tree which had become wild, and grafted in unto the natural trees, which also had become wild.

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

57 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: **Pluck not the wild branches from the trees, save it be those which are most bitter** [*how the Lord works with each of us*]; and in them ye shall graft according to that which I have said.

58 And we will nourish again the trees of the vineyard, and we will trim up the branches thereof; and we will pluck from the trees those branches which are ripened, 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 overcome the evil.

60 And because that I have preserved the natural branches and the roots thereof, and that I have grafted in the natural branches again into their mother tree, and have preserved the roots of their mother tree, that, perhaps, the trees of my vineyard [*all peoples of the earth*] may bring forth again good 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—

Verse 61 seems to denote the final gathering in the last days. The Lord calls many servants to help Him. We are in that number. Note that He is working closely with us.

61 Wherefore, go to, and **call servants**, that **we** may labor diligently **with our might** in the vineyard, that **we** may prepare the way, that **I** may bring forth again the natural fruit [*covenant people*], which natural fruit [*personal righteousness*] is good and the most precious above all other fruit [*all other lifestyles*].

62 Wherefore, let us go to and labor with our might **this last time** [*our day, the dispensation of the fulness of times*], for behold the end [*of the world*] draweth nigh, and **this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard.**

63 Graft in the branches; begin at the last [*the Gentiles*] that they may be first, and that the first [*the Jews*] may be last, and dig about the trees, both old and young, the first and the last; and the last and the first, that all may be nourished once again for the last time.

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.

You've seen this next message several times in the allegory. It teaches that we must be patient with new converts, as well as lifelong members, and be very careful not to criticize them right out of the Church. This is how the Holy Ghost works with each of us.

65 And as they begin to grow ye shall **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.

66 For it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard; 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.

67 And the branches of the natural tree will I graft in again into the natural tree;

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 fruit, and they shall be one.

69 And the bad shall be cast away, yea, even out of all the land of my vineyard; for behold, **only this once will I prune my vineyard.** [*In other words, this*



*is the last time the gospel will go forth to all the world, then the Second Coming will occur.]*

70 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard sent his servant; and the servant went and did as the Lord had commanded him, and brought other servants; and **they were few** [*relatively few members of the Church in the last days to carry the gospel to all the world*].

71 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto them: Go to, and labor in the vineyard, with your might. For behold, **this is the last time** that I shall 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.

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; and they did obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things.

73 And there **began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard** [*the Church began to grow*]; and the natural branches began to grow and **thrive** exceedingly

[*a description of the growth of the Church in the last days*]; and the wild branches [*false doctrines and wicked behaviors?*] began to be plucked off and to be cast away; 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 one body; and the fruits were equal; and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit, which was most precious unto him from the beginning.

75 And it came to pass that when the Lord of the vineyard saw that his fruit was good, and that his vineyard [*the Church?*] 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 **blessed art**

**thou** [*faithful members in the last days*]; 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 natural fruit, that my vineyard is no more corrupted, and the bad is cast away, behold **ye shall have joy with me** because of the fruit of my vineyard.

Verse 76 depicts the Millennium, followed by the “little season” at the end of the Millennium, depicted by verse 77.

76 For behold, for a long time 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** [*the Millennium*], according to that which I have spoken.

77 And when the time cometh that evil fruit shall again come into my vineyard [*the little season at the end of the thousand years*], 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 [*the final judgment*]. And then cometh the

season and the end; and my vineyard will I cause to be burned with fire [*a quick review of what was said above*].

It is important to realize that parables or allegories with so much symbolism as Jacob 5 has, can be interpreted in many different ways. Because of this symbolism, the Holy Ghost can show you a different message each time you read it. For instance, suppose that you were a parent who has done all you can to raise obedient children, yet some have gone astray. You are reading your Book of Mormon and have come to Jacob 5. Your heart is heavy with worry and concern, even about your own status with the Lord. And as you read, the Holy Ghost comforts you by pointing out that the Lord knows how you feel and will continue to help you.

Without any commentary, we will simply **bold** some things that the Holy Ghost might point out to you about our Heavenly Father, a grieving parent.

### **Jacob 5:1–77**

#### **(Repeated for teaching purposes)**

1 Behold, my brethren, do ye not remember to have read the words of the prophet Zenos, 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.

3 For behold, thus saith the Lord, I will liken thee, O house of Israel, like unto a tame olive-tree, which a man took and nourished in his vineyard; and it grew, and waxed old, and began to decay.

4 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard went forth, and he saw that his olive-tree began to decay; and he said: I will prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it, that perhaps it may shoot forth young and tender branches, and it perish not.

5 And it came to pass that he 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 top thereof began to perish.

7 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard saw it, and he said unto his servant: **It grieveth me that I should lose this tree**; wherefore, go and pluck the branches from a wild olive-tree, 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.

8 And behold, saith the Lord of the vineyard, I take away many of these young and tender branches, and I will graft them whithersoever I will; 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 them whithersoever I will.

9 Take thou the branches of the wild olive-tree, and graft them in, in the 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 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 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.

13 And these will I place in the nethermost part 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; 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 branches 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.

15 And it came to pass that a long time passed away, and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Come, let us go down into the vineyard, that we may 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; and it had sprung forth and begun to bear 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 of the root thereof, 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. Now, if we had not grafted in these branches, the tree thereof would have perished. 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 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 first that it had 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.

23 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto his servant: Look hither; behold I have planted another branch of the tree also; and thou knowest that this spot of ground was poorer than the first. 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 branch also, which I have planted; behold that I have nourished it also, and it hath brought forth fruit.

25 And he said unto the servant: Look hither and behold the last. Behold, this have I planted in a good spot of ground; and I have nourished it this long time, and only a part of the tree hath brought forth tame fruit, and the other part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit; behold, I have nourished this tree 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 fruit, and cast them into the fire.

27 But behold, the servant said unto him: Let us prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it a little 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 long time had passed away, and the Lord of the vineyard said unto his 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 end soon cometh; wherefore, I must lay up fruit against the season, unto mine own self.

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 sorts of fruit did cumber the tree.

31 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard did taste of the fruit, every sort according to its number. And the Lord of the vineyard said: Behold, this long time 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 fruit, and there is none of it which is good.

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; 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.

36 Nevertheless, I know that the roots are good, 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.

37 But behold, the wild branches have grown and have overruled 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; and it will soon become ripened, that it may be cast into the fire, except we should do something for it to preserve it.

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 first and the second and also the last; and they had all become corrupt.

40 And the wild fruit of the last had overcome that part of the tree which brought forth good fruit, even that the branch had withered away and died.

41 And it came to pass that **the Lord of the vineyard wept**, and said unto the servant: What could I have done more for my vineyard?

42 Behold, I knew that all the

fruit of the vineyard, save it were these, had become 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 hewn down and cast into the fire.

43 And behold this last, whose branch hath withered away, I did plant in a good spot of ground; 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 cumbered this spot of ground, that I might plant this tree in the stead thereof.

45 And thou beheldest that a part thereof brought forth good fruit, and a part thereof brought forth wild fruit; 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.

46 And now, behold, notwithstanding all the care which we have taken of my vineyard, the trees thereof have become corrupted, that they bring forth no good 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 hewn down and cast into the fire; and **it grieveth me that I should lose them.**

47 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,** and the 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 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. Behold, I say, is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have become corrupted?

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 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 branches of these which I have planted in the nethermost parts of my vineyard, and let us graft them into the tree from whence they came; and let us pluck from the tree those branches whose fruit is most bitter, and graft in the natural branches of the tree in the stead thereof.

53 And this will I do that the tree may not perish, that, perhaps, I may preserve unto myself the roots thereof for mine own purpose.

54 And, behold, the roots of the natural branches of the tree which I planted whithersoever I would are yet alive; wherefore, that I may preserve them also for



mine own purpose, I will take of the branches of this tree, and I will graft them in unto them. Yea, I will graft in unto them the branches of their mother tree, that I may preserve the roots also unto mine own self, that when they shall be sufficiently strong perhaps they may bring forth good fruit unto me, and I may yet have glory in the fruit of my vineyard.

55 And it came to pass that they took from the natural tree which had become wild, and grafted in unto the natural trees, which also had become wild.

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

57 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Pluck not the wild branches from the trees, save it be those which are most bitter; and in them ye shall graft according to that which I have said.

58 And we will nourish again the trees of the vineyard, and we will trim up the branches thereof; and we will pluck from the trees those branches which are ripened, 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 overcome the evil.

60 And because that I have preserved the natural branches and the roots thereof, and that I have grafted in the natural branches again into their mother tree, and have preserved the roots of their mother tree, that, perhaps, the trees of my vineyard may bring forth again good 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 servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may prepare the way, that I may bring forth again the natural fruit, which natural fruit is good and the most precious above all other fruit.

62 Wherefore, let us go to and labor with our might this last time, for behold the end draweth nigh, and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard.

63 Graft in the branches; begin at the last that they may be first, and that the first may be last, and

dig about the trees, both old and young, the first and the last; and the last and the first, that all may be nourished once again for the last time.

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.

65 And as they begin to grow ye shall 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.

66 For **it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard**; 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.

67 And the branches of the natural tree will I graft in again into the natural tree;

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 fruit, and they shall be one.

69 And the bad shall be cast away, yea, even out of all the land of my vineyard; for behold, only this once will I prune my vineyard.

70 And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard sent his servant; and the servant went and did as the Lord had commanded him, and brought other servants; and they were few.

71 And the Lord of the vineyard said unto them: Go to, and labor in the vineyard, with your might. For behold, this is the last time that I shall 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.

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; and they did obey the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard in all things.

73 And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard; and the natural branches began to grow and thrive exceedingly; and the wild branches began to be plucked off and to be cast away; 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 one body; and the fruits were equal; and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit, which was most precious unto him from the beginning.

75 And it came to pass that when the 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 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 natural fruit, that my vineyard is no more corrupted, and the bad is cast away, behold ye shall have joy with me because of the fruit of my vineyard.

76 For behold, for a long time 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, 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.

There is no doubt that the Lord understands the feelings of a grieving parent.

## JACOB 6

Jacob now explains some basic teachings of the Allegory of Zenos in chapter 5.

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 Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, in the which he likened them unto a tame olive-tree, must surely come to pass.

2 And the day that he [*the Lord*] shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people, is the day, yea, even the last time [*the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith*], that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power [*the final missionary work to gather the righteous before the Second Coming*], to nourish and prune his vineyard; and after that the end soon cometh.

3 And how blessed are they [*missionaries and faithful members*] who have labored diligently in his vineyard [*throughout the earth*]; and how cursed are they who shall be cast out into their

own place [*the wicked; see D&C 88:114*]! And the world shall be burned with fire [*at the Second Coming*].

4 And how merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth [*keeps His promises to*] the house of Israel, both roots and branches [*no matter where they have been scattered to throughout the world*]; and he stretches forth his hands unto them all the day long [*invites them to repent and return to Him*]; and they are a stiffnecked [*prideful*] and a gainsaying [*always rebelling and denying God*] people; but as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God [*a simple fact*].

5 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I beseech [*beg*] 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. And while his arm of mercy is extended towards you in the light of the day [*while you have a chance to respond*], harden not your hearts.

6 Yea, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; for why will ye die [*spiritually*]?

7 For behold, after ye have been nourished by the good word of

God all the day long, will ye bring forth evil fruit, that ye must be hewn down and cast into the fire [*do you want to be destroyed*]?

8 Behold, will ye reject these words? Will ye reject the words of the prophets; and will ye reject all the words which have been spoken concerning Christ, after so many have spoken concerning him; and deny the good word of Christ, and the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and quench the Holy Spirit, and make a 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 shame and awful guilt before the bar [*the judgment bar*] of God?

10 And according to the power of justice [*the law of justice*], for justice cannot be denied [*cannot be robbed; see Alma 42:25*], ye must go away into that lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames are unquenchable, and whose smoke ascendeth up forever and ever, which lake of fire and brimstone is endless torment.

11 O then, my beloved brethren, **repent ye**, and enter in at the

strait [*narrow*] gate [*repentance and baptism*], and continue in the way which is narrow, until ye shall obtain eternal life [*exaltation*].

12 **O be wise; what can I say more?**

13 Finally, I bid you farewell, until I shall meet you before the pleasing bar of God, which bar striketh the wicked with awful dread and fear. Amen.

## JACOB 7

Sherem is the first of three anti-christs whom we meet in the Book of Mormon. The other two are Nehor (Alma 1) and Korihor (Alma 30). Sherem is typical of many who oppose the Church today. You will see that he is well educated as far as the world is concerned and full of self importance. By studying his encounter with Jacob, we can learn several things to watch out for in such enemies of righteousness. We will use **bold** to point things out.

1 AND now it came to pass after some years had passed away, there came a man among the people of Nephi, whose name was Sherem.

2 And it came to pass that he

began to preach among the people, and to declare unto them that there should be no Christ. And he preached **many things which were flattering** unto the people [*things they wanted to hear*]; and this he did that he might overthrow the doctrine of Christ. [*He did this intentionally.*]

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.**

You may have noticed that many apostates today and others who are angry at the Church seek opportunities to debate the Brethren in public. Satan's methodology does not seem to change.

4 And he was learned, that he had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people [*he was very well educated and very skilled in public speaking*]; wherefore, he could use much flattery, and much power of speech, according to the power of the devil. [*The devil can inspire people and help them be skillful in leading people astray.*]

Next, we see that Sherem was not very wise in choosing Jacob as his next victim.

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

Perhaps you can picture Sherem swaggering up to Jacob and addressing him with a touch of sarcasm in his voice. He even calls him "Brother." Note the skill with which he attacks Jacob and the gospel with phrases designed to cast doubt.

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 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 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 blasphemy; for **no man knoweth of such things; for he cannot tell of things to come.** [*No one can know the future. This statement will come back to cause trouble for Sherem in verse 9; also, among other things, he is denying the existence of true prophets.*] And after this manner did Sherem contend against me.

8 But behold, the Lord God poured in his Spirit into my soul, insomuch that I did confound [*stop, confuse*] 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; but **I know that there is no Christ, neither has been, nor ever will be.**

In verse 7, above, Sherem claimed that no one can know the future. In verse 9, he contradicts himself. He says, in effect, that he knows the future and that there never will be a Christ.

10 And I said unto him: Believest thou the scriptures [*Old Testament*]? And he said, Yea.

Jacob's approach to Sherem in verse 11 is rather gentle. He is trying to give him an "out" for what he has previously

claimed. This is a kind approach because, if taken advantage of by Sherem, his ego is not so much at stake. Rather, he simply needs to be taught the truth. He will not take advantage of this opportunity to salvage his ego.

Verse 11 is also a powerful reminder to us that the Old Testament, in its original, pure form, clearly taught about Christ.

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 prophets have written, nor prophesied, save they have spoken concerning this Christ.**

Next, Jacob will bear pure, simple testimony to Sherem. This is a reminder to us of the power of this approach to teaching and spreading the gospel.

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 power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, I know if there should be no atonement made all mankind must be lost [*compare with 2 Nephi 9:7–9*].

Next, we hear the sarcasm in Sherem's voice as he rebuts Jacob's humble testimony and demands a sign.

13 And it came to pass that he said unto me: Show me a sign by this power of the Holy Ghost, **in the which ye know so much.**

14 And I said unto him: What am I that I should tempt God to show unto thee a sign in the thing which thou knowest to be true? [*Jacob knows by the power of the Spirit that Sherem is lying. Sherem knows Jacob is telling the truth.*] Yet thou wilt deny it, because thou art of the devil [*the devil is a liar*]. Nevertheless, not my will be done; but if God shall smite thee [*this is not the kind of sign Sherem had in mind*], let that be a 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.

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.

The fact that Sherem did not die immediately is a reminder of the kindness of the Lord even to the vilest of sinners. Despite Sherem's sarcastic attitude and damaging false teachings, he is an individual of infinite worth. The Lord shows tender mercy in giving him some time to think it

over before he dies. It will work, according to verses 17–19.

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 deceived by the power of the devil. And he spake of hell, and of eternity, and of eternal punishment. [*Sherem has a very good "gospel doctrinal vocabulary," probably indicating that he knew the gospel well before he apostatized.*]

19 And he said: I fear lest I have committed the unpardonable sin, for I have lied unto God; 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 awful; but I confess unto God.



Many students of the scriptures wonder whether or not Sherem would qualify to be a son of perdition. While final judgment is up to the Savior (John 5:22), we can note that one who becomes a son of perdition would think and act completely like the devil (see D&C 76:31–35) whereas Sherem has true remorse.

20 And it came to pass that when he had said these words he could say no more, and he gave up the ghost [*he died*].

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 overcome that they fell to the earth. [*Many were reconverted.*]

22 Now, this thing was pleasing unto me, Jacob, for I had requested it [*the reconversion of those who had followed Sherem*] 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 love of God was restored again among the people; and they searched the scriptures [*key to avoiding personal apostasy*], and hearkened no more to the words of this wicked man.

Next, Jacob will lament the fact that they were unsuccessful in reclaiming the Lamanites of his day.

24 And it came to pass that many means were devised to reclaim and restore the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth; but it all was vain, for they delighted in wars and bloodshed, and they had an eternal hatred against us, their brethren. And they sought by the power of their arms [*weapons*] to destroy us continually.

Some people are very much opposed to building up weapons of defense. Here, the Book of Mormon applies to us in our day by advising us on this matter.

25 Wherefore [*this is why*], **the people of Nephi did fortify against them with their arms, and with all their might**, trusting in the God and rock of their salvation; wherefore, they became as yet, conquerors of their enemies.

26 And it came to pass that I, Jacob, began to be old; and the record of this people being kept on the other plates of Nephi [*the large plates*], wherefore, I conclude this record [*Jacob's portion of the small plates of Nephi*], declaring that I have written according to the best of

my knowledge, by saying that the time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, 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.

Next, Jacob will turn over the responsibility for keeping the plates and engraving upon them to his son, Enos.

27 And I, Jacob, saw that I must soon go down to my grave; wherefore, I said unto my son Enos: Take these plates. And I told him the things which my brother Nephi had commanded

me, and he promised obedience unto the commands. And I make an end of my writing upon these plates [*the small plates*], which writing has been small; and to the reader I bid farewell, hoping that many of my brethren may read my words. Brethren, adieu.

“Adieu,” which means “Good-bye,” may sound a bit strange in the Book of Mormon. Some critics of the Book of Mormon point out this use of a French word and use it against Joseph Smith. What they don’t realize is that “adieu” was commonly used in Joseph Smith’s day to bid farewell. In fact, American English is loaded with words adapted over time from several different European languages.