

Jacob 5–7: Allegory of Olive Tree

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Quotes

- If everyone thinks alike, nobody thinks very much.
- If two people see eye to eye, one is not necessary.

1. Mine “Errand” from the Lord (Jac 1:17; 2:1)

OED Errand: (1&2) message to convey to other

I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord. (1:17) “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. (2:1)

2. What is the meaning of “keep his commandments which he has given me”? (Moro 4:3)

- a. Outer gospel: like Pharisees; 100 % on all tests
- b. Inner gospel: “look” at our spiritual Liahona daily so we can know/feel God’s will and follow our daily promptings

While Nephi was hesitating to kill Laban, he realized that “they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law.”

(After returning with the plates of brass) “I and my father had kept the commandments wherewith the Lord had commanded us.” (1 Ne 5:20)

(After marriages of sons) “my father had fulfilled all the commandments of the Lord which had been given unto him.” (1 Ne 16:8)

After the resurrection, Jesus “through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles” (Acts 1:2)

“Keep his commandments” includes general commandments (Law of Moses) as taught in the scriptures (not by Pharisees) and personal commandments (leave, brass plates, ...) that come to me directly through the Spirit.

1. Living inner gospel → peace
2. Living only outer gospel → frustration; Those who leave church (excommunicate/disfellowship) stop living the inner gospel (personal prayer, scriptures, follow promptings) about 6+ months earlier and heart hardens.

3. The “Lord’s Anointed”

An angel told Jacob that Christ would be the name of the Messiah (2 Ne 10:3). Both Messiah (Hebrew) and Christ (Greek) mean anointed one. Nephi “anointed a man to be a king” (Jac 1:9).

“Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me ... but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them.” (D&C 121:16) Judas “lifted up his heel against” (Jn 13:18) or betrayed Christ.

Lifted heel (kick) refers to betraying or finding fault with or evil speaking of (say one has sinned) Lord’s anointed.

While studying the phrases “evil speaking” and “the Lord’s anointed,” I learned that the Hebrew word *Messiah* and the Greek word *Christ* both mean the anointed one. Prophets are called the Lord’s anointed. Moses anointed Aaron a priest. Saul was anointed king. David was anointed to become a king and later was anointed king of Israel. One day in the temple, I wondered, “Does that mean I should not speak evil of or find fault with anyone who has been anointed to become a king or queen?” I suddenly felt I needed to think and say kind things

about people I saw every week at church, work, home, or in the mirror. It no longer seemed right to say unkind things about myself or others.

4. Jacob 5: The Allegory of the Olive Tree

Joseph Fielding Smith: “We have something in the Book of Mormon that, if we did not have other truth expressed in it, would be sufficient evidence of the divinity of this book. I have reference to [Jacob 5] ... I think that as many as [99 out of 100] who read the Book of Mormon, read this parable through without grasping the fullness and meaning of it. And I think this is one of the greatest passages in the Book of Mormon ... No matter how many times you have read the Book of Mormon ... take a few minutes ... and just read carefully every word in [Jacob 5] ... No greater parable was ever recorded. It is a parable of the scattering of Israel. (Answers to Gospel Questions, 4:203–7)

Symbol	Interpretation (I-BofM, PYK)
Vineyard	The world
Master—servant(s)	Christ—prophets, or God—Christ
Tame olive tree	House of Israel; Lord’s covenant people
Wild olive tree	Gentiles (non-Israel)
Roots of tame olive tree	God’s covenant and teachings
Branches	Groups of people
Grafting	Being joined to covenant or Israel
Transplanting branches	Scattering of Israel
Pruning, digging, nourishing (dunging)	The Lord’s efforts to persuade his children to produce good fruit.
Fruit of the tree	Lives or works of men
Main top of the tree	Leaders of the house of Israel
Decay	Wickedness and apostasy
Last pruning & grafting	Missionary work (D&C 39:17; 95:4)
Cast branches into fire	Judgment of God

5. Outline of the allegory of Zenos (PYK)

Founding and aging of the house of Israel (5:3)

- A. The tree was planted (the founding of the house of Israel) (5:3),
- B. The tree had grown old and parts had begun to decay (the house of Israel was old and had begun to go into apostasy) (5:3)

Scattering of the house of Israel (5:4–14)

- A. The Lord of the vineyard came to the vineyard and noticed the decay (God saw the apostasy among the house of Israel) (5:4).
- B. The Lord acted to stem the decay by pruning, digging about, and dunging the tree (God did what he could do to eliminate apostasy among the house of Israel) (5:4–5).
- C. Part of the tree recovered but the top began to perish (some of the house of Israel began to look promising but the leadership was going bad) (5:6).
- D. The Lord tried to save the tree (God scattered Israel) (5:7–14).
 1. He cut out and burned the worst branches (God destroyed the more apostate parts of the house of Israel) (5:7, 9).
 2. He had wild olive branches grafted into the mother tree (non-Israelites were mixed with the house of Israel) (5:7–10)
 3. He had natural branches grafted in other parts of his vineyard and natural branches planted in the nethermost parts of his vineyard (some of the house of Israel were scattered among non-Israelite people and some were taken as an entity to other parts of the world) (5:8, 13–14). For example, Lehi’s family settled in the Americas where the land was cleared of previous growth (5:44).

Day of the former-day Saints (5:15–28)

- A. The Lord returns after a long time (5:15).
- B. The mother tree with wild branches produced good fruit (Israel with non-Israelites grafted in produced good works) (5:16–18).
- C. The mother tree and all the transplanted branches of the mother tree bore nothing but good fruit, except the last one, half of which bore good fruit and the other half bad fruit (scattered Israel had produced good fruit, except the Nephites and Lamanites which produced good and bad fruit) (5:19–25).
- D. The Lord wanted to destroy the bad part of the last planting, but the servant counseled to try one more time to save the tree (God did not give up on the Lamanites) (5:26–28).

Great Apostasy (5:29–49)

- A. After a long time, the Lord came back to the vineyard and found that the mother tree bore nothing but bad fruit (a long time after the crucifixion, God found nothing but apostasy in the Old World) (5:29–37).
- B. The other natural trees also bore nothing but bad fruit, and the bad part of the last transplanted tree had overcome the good part (all of scattered Israel had gone into complete apostasy, and the Lamanites had destroyed the Nephites) (5:38–49).

Gathering of the house of Israel (5:50–74)

- A. The Lord determined to make one last effort to save his trees by grafting back into the natural tree the natural branches he had grafted into the wild trees (after a long period of apostasy, God will make one last effort to gather Israel) (5:50–74).
- B. As the newly grafted natural branches grow strong, the Lord will cut out branches that produce wild fruit, beginning with the worst, (God will gather scattered Israel to the gospel, while those that produce evil works will be cut off) (5:57–69).
- C. In this last effort to produce good fruit, a few other servants will be brought into the work (as God prepares the earth for the Millennium, he will call others to help) (5:61–63, 70–71).

Millennium (5:74–76)

The pruning and grafting of the natural trees will continue until there is no more wild fruit on the natural trees (God will continue to work with those who have gathered to the gospel until they produce nothing but good fruit).

End of the world (5:77)

After a long time, the trees will again begin to produce wild fruit. When that happens, the Lord will destroy the vineyard by fire (the Millennium will end as people again begin to produce evil works; this will continue until God destroys the earth by fire).

6. What was the question?

Joseph: I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or ... the parable? (TPJS 276–7)

Jacob 4–6 appears to be one talk

Jacob's Second Question: How is it possible that these [Jews], after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner? Behold ... I will unfold this mystery unto you. (Jac 4:17–18)

Among other meanings, a mystery is a spiritual truth grasped only through divine revelation.

7. How does the allegory answer the question? (6:2–3)

² And the day that he shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people, is ... the last time, that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard; and after that the end soon cometh. ³ And how blessed are they who have labored diligently in his vineyard; and how cursed are they who shall be cast out into their own place! And the world shall be burned with fire. (6:2)

Members and missionaries are the laborers.

8. Jacob's First Question

“Be reconciled unto [God] through the atonement of Christ ... and ye may obtain a resurrection, and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God. ... Why not speak of the atonement of Christ, and attain to a perfect knowledge of him?” (Jac 4:11–12)

[OED *reconcile*: (1) to bring a person into friendly relations after an estrangement. (3) to set estranged people at one again; to bring back into accord, to reunite in harmony]

[OED *at one*: (1) in concord or friendship; (2) in a state of harmony or unity of feeling; (3) of one mind.]

Jacob then points to the Jews' deliberate efforts to distance God and render him incomprehensible: they sought to create a God who could not be understood (Jacob 4:14). For their self-inflicted blindness God took away “his plainness from them ... because they desired it” (Jacob 4:14). Here Jacob asks the second key question: “My beloved, how is it possible that these [the Jews], after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner? Behold, my beloved brethren, I will unfold this *mystery* unto you” (Jacob 4:17–18). Among other meanings, a *mystery* is a spiritual truth grasped only through divine revelation.

The mystery that Jacob unfolds, therefore, counters the Jews' deliberate mystification of God and reveals the true nature of Jesus Christ and his divine activity in the lives of even the most intractable of men. Jacob's questions alert us that the allegory will deal with grace, atonement, and their relationship to Israel. (MCT)

9. What do we learn about God and Atonement? (MCT)

God ? Impersonal God OR deeply involved?

Though the symbolic elements of the allegory represent historical people and events, a yet greater insight may lie in the allegory as a theodicy, that is, God's explication of himself and his work. Not only did the Jews dematerialize God and scramble the facts about him, but so also has every apostasy since. The mystery that Jacob illuminates is that God is not distant, but full of grace—of divine enabling power—ceaselessly involving himself with each of his children, seeking a response, seeking a relationship.

Atonement events opened door; Desire for oneness

The allegory treats God's response to Israel's spiritual death, represented by its geographically scattered condition. Separation of the people of Israel from each other indicates that the atonement is not working in their lives; otherwise, they would live in Zion together. The allegory describes God's efforts to gather these disparate parts of Israel into at-one-ment with him. ...

In Latter-day Saint usage, *atonement*, or *at-one-ment*, refers not only to the act of redemption Jesus wrought in Gethsemane and on the cross, but also to the Lord's ongoing labors to bring his children back into oneness with him. After all, it is his work,

as well as his glory, to bring to pass the eternal life of man (Moses 1:39). The word atonement first appears in William Tyndale's 1526 English version of the Bible. (OED) He used the word at-one-ment to translate the Greek word for *reconciliation* (*katalagē*) (Romans 5:11). ... In understanding Jacob's allegory, it is helpful to understand the strength of the divine desire behind the process of at-one-ment.

1. Grafting: as a hen gathers her chicks
2. Digging :
3. Nourishing:
4. Pruning:

It is in the figures of pruning, grafting, and digging about that the Lord reveals most specifically the function of the Atonement. ... *Grafting in* might represent events and experiences which bring one to Christ—conversion. *Digging about* suggests the divine structuring of one's environment for individual tutorials. *Dunging* suggests spiritual nourishing. As to *pruning*, we might understand those painful experiences in which we feel stymied as the divine will operates against our own. Hugh B. Brown provided an excellent illustration in his little parable of the currant bush. At the end the Gardener speaks to the little bush, which he has cut back again and again:

Do not cry. ... What I have done to you was necessary. ... You were not intended for what you sought to be. ... If I had allowed you to continue ... you would have failed in the purpose for which I planted you and my plans for you would have been defeated. You must not weep; some day when you are richly laden with experience you will say, "He was a wise gardener. He knew the purpose of my earth life. ... I thank him now for what I thought was cruel." ... Help me, dear God, to endure the pruning, and to grow as you would have me grow; to take my allotted place in life and ever more to say, "Thy will not mine be done." (HBB)

This ceaseless divine activity in seeking to bring men into his presence, even while they walk the earth, is reflected in the continual nourishing, digging, and pruning going on in the allegorical vineyard. ... The perfect knowledge of Christ that Jacob refers to (Jacob 4:14), that is, at-one-ment with him, is achieved in Christ's revelation of himself through the pruning, digging, and nourishing of his individual covenant children.

How does this apply to us?

The power of the atonement seeks to affect men at every level of their existence. It urges people to gather geographically into Zions. It promotes generosity and consecration of goods. It prompts people to resonate emotionally and to synergize spiritually. The Lord says, "I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27).

Finally, an individual must discover Jacob's mystery for himself. The greatest value of the allegory may be that it serves to make one conscious of the efforts of the Lord to draw him by "the enticings of the Holy Spirit" (Mosiah 3:19) into a working relationship with a powerful Benefactor. This approach to the allegory enlarges one's confidence in the Lord's unceasing labors in his behalf and prompts him to search within to find the evidences of divine instruction and nurturing. The allegory teaches that the structure of oneness, of at-one-ment, is already in place. One need only discover and embrace the relationship.

10. Jacob's Application to Individuals (Jac 6:4–7)

How merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches; and he stretches forth his hands unto them all the day long; and they are a stiffnecked ... people; but as many as will not *harden their hearts* shall be saved. ... Wherefore, ... repent, and come with full purpose of heart, and cleave unto God *as he cleaveth unto you*. ... For ... ye have been nourished by the good word of God all the day long.

If God is seeking access to his children continually, what is the meaning of the periods of divine absence in the allegory? The Lord declares, "I have stretched forth mine hand *almost* all the day long" (Jacob 5:47). Jacob drops the word *almost* when he reiterates: "He stretches forth his hands unto them *all the day long*. ... Come with full purpose of heart, and cleave unto God as he cleaveth unto you. ... For why will ye die? ... For behold, ... ye have been nourished by the good word of God *all the day long*" (Jacob 6:4–7). *Cleave* is atonement language. It is not God who has ceased to cleave, but man who has rejected God's love. These periods in which we do not see divine activity signify not so much the Master's absence, but rather *Israel's* voluntary withdrawal from the true olive tree. [like prodigal son]

11. How does one *harden* his or her heart?

"There are many that harden their hearts against the Holy Spirit, that it hath no place in them; wherefore, they cast many things away which are written and esteem them as things of naught. (2 Ne 33:2)

Mosiah 10:14 "against the Lord"; → not hearken

Hardened hearts "against the word(s) of" God or prophets

Alma 48:3 Amalikhah hardened their hearts (stir up to anger) against Nephites, blinded minds

FIND FAULT with message or messenger

Point out exceptions to general statements or vice versa
Find fault with what one said or did not say.

Why do we miss or ignore promptings?

(a) promptings and commandments often appear foolish (e.g., forgive, do good to enemy, pick up litter).

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor 2:14)

(b) Promptings bounce off hearts that are hardened by playing the blame game (lesson #5), being stirred up to anger and watching reruns of our grievances on our "Laman murmuring channel."

12. Olive Tree and Tree of Life in Lehi's Dream

The fruit of each tree is "*most precious* ... above all other fruits" (1 Ne 15:36; Jac 5:61). People "receive strength and nourishment from the *true vine*" or when they are "grafted ... into the *true olive tree*" (1 Ne 15:15–16) "or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah" (1 Ne 10:12–14).

13. Book of Mormon Evidences

In Jacob 5 “there are many detailed horticultural practices and procedures that were not likely known by an untrained person, and may not have been fully appreciated by professional botanists or horticulturalists at the time the Book of Mormon was translated.” (*Allegory*, 552; 520–523, 530)

Why olive trees “dug about”? “It is necessary to loosen the soil to make nutrients and moisture available to the roots. Because the upper layers of soil tend to tie up phosphates and potash, they often do not reach the feeder roots unless the soil is disturbed. ... Shallow working of the soil ... forms an insulating layer, which prevents evaporation of water, increases permeability of the soil, kills weeds, and aerates the soil, increasing nitrification and root development.” (*Allegory*, 520–521)

Pruning: “All of the fruit of the olive is borne on second-year wood and the same wood does not bear again. For this reason a new crop of shoots each year is necessary for fruit to set. ... Obtaining a new tree from a sprout takes from [3 to 8] years.” (*Allegory*, 522–523)

Transplanting: “The olive tree is one of the few fruit trees that can be propagated by taking a branch of a tree and burying it in the ground.” (*Allegory*, 530)

Prophecy: Joseph Fielding Smith said, “Joseph Smith did not write [Jacob 5]. That was written by the inspiration of the Almighty ... That tells you of history. Are we going to preach the gospel in Korea, in Japan, in China? Yes, we are. Why? Because the blood of Israel is there. And the Lord did just what he said he would do with Abraham and his posterity. He scattered them over the whole face of the earth. So now the Gentiles are sanctified by the blood of Abraham.” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, 4:203-7)

14. Sherem and Jacob (Jacob 7)

Sherem “did lead away many hearts; ... ⁴ And he was learned, that he had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people; wherefore, he could use much flattery, and much power of speech, according to the power of the devil. 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.

⁶ Brother Jacob, ... thou goest about much, preaching that which ye call the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ.

Other gods: “the prophet ... that shall speak in the name of other gods, ... shall die.” (Deut 18:20)

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.

Apostasy: If one says “let us ... serve other gods, which ye have not known ... thou shalt surely kill him” (Deut 13:2–13)

And ... I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is blasphemy;

Blasphemy included insolent or seditious speech against God, king, man, holy places or things, including the law. (JWW) One who blasphemed was put to death (Ex 20:7; Lev 24:10–16).

for no man knoweth of such things; for he cannot tell of things to come.

False prophecy: “If the thing followeth not, nor come to pass” “that prophet shall die.” (Deut 18:20–22)

¹³ And ... [Sherem] said ...: Show me a sign ... ¹⁵ And ... the power of the Lord came upon him, insomuch that he fell to the earth. ... [After he confessed to the people] he gave up the ghost. ²¹ And ... they were astonished exceedingly; insomuch that the power of God came down upon them, and they were overcome that they fell to the earth.

False witness: “if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother ... And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.” (Deut 19:18–19)

15. Endure to the End

After the allegory of the olive tree Jacob said:

Repent ye, and *enter in at the strait gate*, and *continue in the way which is narrow*, until ye shall obtain eternal life. (Jac 6:11)

We labored diligently ... that we might persuade them to come unto Christ, and partake of the goodness of God, that they might *enter into his rest* (Jac 1:7) “which *rest is the fulness of his glory*” (D&C 84:24). See TPJS 149–151 (on last handout).

[The Israelites] hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord ... swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. (D&C 84:24)

Like Nephi, Jacob had seen Christ (2 Ne 11:2). His counsel to follow the path to eternal life is similar to what Joseph said about the path to the Second Comforter (see lesson #9).

Joseph: After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized ... and receives the Holy Ghost ... which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him ... then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other [or Second] Comforter. ... When any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, (TPJS 149–151)

Conclusion

Leave enough time for conclusion!

Discuss the “Endure to the End” (above)

Before the allegory of the olive tree, Jacob said,

¹¹ Be reconciled unto [God] through the atonement of Christ ... and ye may obtain a resurrection ... and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God. (Jac 4:11)

“How can we be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ? ... Remain attached long enough to our roots, the scriptural heritage revealed by the God of Israel, that the healing influence of divine direction, of a “knowledge of the true Messiah,” our Lord and Redeemer (1 Ne 10:14), can change us from a twig bearing bitter fruit to a natural twig bearing good fruit. It does not matter whether our scriptural heritage is planted in a good spot on the earth or a bad one, we can bear fruit under the loving and wise care of the Lord of the vineyard.” (Hoskisson, 96).

Read Elder Holland Quote (below)

The Lord loves each of us. In scripture and the temple, the Lord teaches us the path back to Him and invites us to follow it that we might one day enter His presence.

May we each seek to know and do his will each day so the Holy Ghost can lead us back to His presence.

Quotes

Jeffrey R. Holland: There is much more here than simply the unraveling of convoluted Israelite history. Of greater significance in this allegory is the benevolent view of God that it provides. He is portrayed here as one who repeatedly, painstakingly, endlessly tries to save the work of His hands and in moments of greatest disappointment holds His head in His hands and weeps, ‘What could I have done more for my vineyard?’ (Jac 5:41, 47, 49) This allegory is a declaration of divine love, of God’s unceasing effort as a father laboring on behalf of His children. As one writer has noted, ‘Zenos’s allegory ought to take its place beside the parable of the prodigal son. Both stories make the Lord’s mercy so movingly memorable.’ (*Heroes from the Book of Mormon*, 37)

NOTE: The yellow shading shows what is NOT on the handout that I use in class. The handout makes it possible to share information while only briefly referring to it in class. The handout and any other supplements for the lesson are at www.sviewp.com.

Sources:

OLIVE TREE

- *Allegory* = Stephen Ricks and John W. Welch, *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, <http://mi.byu.edu>
- PYK = Paul Y. Hoskisson, in *BMRC*, 805-806.
- MCT = M. Catherine Thomas, “Jacob’s Allegory: The Mystery of Christ” in *Allegory*, 11–20. (see www.sviewp.com)
- JWW = John W. Welch, *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, 84–86
- HBB = Hugh B. Brown, “The Gardener and the Currant Bush,” in *Eternal Quest*, 243.

GENERAL

- BMRC = Dennis L. Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*.
- TBM = Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols.
- OM = Original Manuscript
- PM = Printer’s Manuscript
- *LDS View* = This computer program with the scriptures in 11 languages was previously sold in the Church Distribution Center as *Scriptures on CDM*. It can now be downloaded with the scriptures in up to 30 languages (<http://ldsview.byu.edu>). At <http://WordCruncher.com>, you can download WordCruncher and Webster’s 1844 Dictionary (2nd Edition). If LDS View was downloaded first, WordCruncher will let you see the English scriptures and when you click on an English word, you can see Webster’s 1844 definition.
- Other Bible Translations are at <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>

BAJA model

- Baja = www.achoiceand.com

MESOAMERICAN model

- Sorenson = John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*.
- *Reexploring* = John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Poulsen = bomgeography.poulsenll.org/bomdirections.html

Hebraisms

- Par-Heb = Donald W. Parry, “Hebraisms and Other Ancient Peculiarities,” <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Tved-Heb = John Tvedtnes, “The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon,” chapter 8 in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*; <http://mi.byu.edu>

Other sources

- BD = *Bible Dictionary* (in English LDS Scriptures).
- GS = *Guide to the Scriptures* (in electronic LDS Scriptures)
- I-BofM = New Testament Institute manual, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & his Apostles*, institute.lds.org
- KJV King James Version of the Bible.
- NIV = New International Version of the Bible
- *TPJS* = *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
- *SOED* = Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
- *OED* = Oxford English Dictionary
- BDB = *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*
- Bauer = Walter Bauer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*
- EJ = *Encyclopedia Judaica*
- Rona = Daniel Rona, www.israelrevealed.com/comp-sup-r.htm.
- MM = Meridian Magazine, Gospel Doctrine, www.ldsmag.com
- beardall2000.com/gospdoct.shtml; www.gospeldoctrine.com

Longer or omitted quotes

One interpretation is that the master of the vineyard is Christ and the servant is a collective image of prophets. The second possibility, which Hoskisson favors, is that the master is the Father, and the servant the son. (Hoskisson, Paul. "The Allegory of the Olive Tree in Jacob." In: *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, FARMS, p. 71).

"The Encyclopedia Miqráit notes that "The Egyptian *k3mu* could be used for both a vineyard of vines and a plantation of mixed fruit trees. . . . The scribe Any counted twelve vines that he planted in his garden, and alongside them 100 fig trees, 170 date palms, and the like." (Tvednes, John. "Vineyard or Olive Orchard?" In: *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*. FARMS, p. 481).

The Lord sees the decay of Israel. The response is not anger, nor an impulse to destroy, but rather a care to salvage.

"Columella writes a good deal about grafting, in *De rustica* 5.11.1-15 and *De arboribus* 26-27 (although a good deal of the material in the two works overlaps, even to the point of being straight repetition). He includes a considerable amount also about oleiculture, in *De rustica* from 5.9.16. He certainly thinks he knows what he is talking about, and it is interesting that in 5.9.16, almost in passing, he says that well-established trees that are failing to produce proper crops can be rejuvenated and made more productive if they are ingrafted with shoots from the wild olive". (Baxter, A.G., and J. A. Ziesler. "Paul and Arboriculture: Romans 11.17-24." In: *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*. 1985, 24:26).

Baxter and Ziesler conclude: "What Paul describes is therefore a perfectly possible process that would be undertaken to rejuvenate a tree." They further note a similar practice in modern Israel and in the Mediterranean. (Baxter, A.G., and J. A. Ziesler. "Paul and Arboriculture: Romans 11.17-24." In: *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*. 1985, 24:27.) Further confirmation comes from Hess, Fairbanks, Welch, and Driggs who also conclude that this is acceptable means of revitalizing the root of a tree (Hess, Wilford M., Daniel J. Fairbanks, John W. Welch, and Jonathan K. Driggs "Botanical Aspects of Olive Culture Relevant to Jacob 5" In: *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*." FARMS, Provo, p. 507).

"The olive is one of the few fruit trees that can be propagated by taking a branch of a tree and burying it in the ground. This is apparently what Zenos had in mind when he indicates that the Lord of the vineyard took branches and "planted" them, saying that the natural branches were "hid" in the ground (Jacob 5:14). Hillhouse states that the olive is extremely tenacious. When the trunk has perished by frost or by fire it forms new sprouts. If a bit of the bark, with a thin layer of wood, is buried in the earth, it becomes a perfect plant. All of the branches and even the trunk can be removed and the tree may still live (see question 19). Olive shoots can be cut off, placed in soil, and indeed they will root." (Hess, Wilford M., Daniel J. Fairbanks, John W. Welch, and Jonathan K. Driggs "Botanical Aspects of Olive Culture Relevant to Jacob 5" In *Allegory*, 530).

The idea of planting branches works for the allegory of the olive tree, but does not work for many other botanical species. It seems rather unusual that a modern creation would include this rather odd element which fits only into the culture of the olive, with which Joseph should not have been familiar.

"It might also seem odd that one of the trees planted in poor soil should produce good fruit. One of the branches was planted in "a poor spot of ground . . . poorer than the first" (Jacob 5:22-23). Nevertheless, this plant thrived. Although olives sometimes do well in poor soils because of their long maturing period and

ability to tolerate considerable salinity, boron, etc., it is only with much attention to cultural practices that productive trees will grow on poor soil. When all of the important cultural factors are carefully optimized, olive trees will grow and produce a crop on poor soil. Accordingly, the unusual poorness of the soil in this part of the allegory draws attention to the extraordinary care and power of the Lord of the vineyard. The production of good fruit by the plant under these circumstances is attributable exclusively to the fact that the Lord had "nourished it this long time" (Jacob 5:23)." (Hess, Wilford M., Daniel J. Fairbanks, John W. Welch, and Jonathan K. Driggs "Botanical Aspects of Olive Culture Relevant to Jacob 5" In: *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*. FARMS, Provo Page 507)

"I cannot complete this discussion of the allegory of the olive tree without returning to the beginning, the reason Jacob gave the allegory: How can we be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ? If I were writing in good Hebrew style I would expect the reader at this point to know, from the allegory itself and the above discussion, how reconciliation takes place. But I am not, and I would be untrue to my own heritage if I did not to the best of my ability clearly explain how we can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. As the allegory suggests, the process is deceptively simple and easy: Remain attached long enough to our roots, the scriptural heritage revealed by the God of Israel, that the healing influence of divine direction, of a "knowledge of the true Messiah," our Lord and Redeemer (1 Nephi 10:14), can change us from a twig bearing bitter fruit to a natural twig bearing good fruit. It does not matter whether our scriptural heritage is planted in a good spot on the earth or a bad one, we can bear fruit under the loving and wise care of the Lord of the vineyard." (Hoskisson, p. 96).