

**BM#13 The Allegory of the Tame Olive Trees Plus Sherem
Jacob 5-7**

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I. Introduction

A. What is an allegory?

The title of this lesson is "The Allegory of the Tame Olive Trees." What is an allegory?

Webster's New World Dictionary states,

"It is from the Greek *allegoria*, meaning the description of one thing under the image of another.

"A story in which people, things, and happenings have a hidden or symbolic meaning: allegories are used for teaching or explaining idea, moral principles, etc."
(*Webster's New World Dictionary*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1988, [Third College Edition, 1994], 36).

By taking time to determine the symbolic meaning of the people, things, and happenings, rather than giving it only our brief attention, we are then able to gain an increased understanding of the meaning the author is conveying.

B. Who is Zenos?

The writings of Zenos were on the Brass plates or scriptures that Nephi and his brothers retrieved from Laban during their return trip to Jerusalem. (See 1 Nephi 3:12; 5:10-22).

While our knowledge of Zenos is limited, in the Book of Mormon there are several scriptural references to him and his teachings.

Chart 1. Prophet Zenos—before 600 A.D.

A. Personal	1. Of Tribe of Joseph 2. Writings on plates of	1. 3 Ne.10:16 2. 3 Ne.10:17
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	Brass 3. Slain for his prophecies	3. Hel.8:19
B. Prophecies of Christ	1. Testified Christ buried in Sepulcher, 3 days of darkness. 2. Testified thundering, lightings, tempest, etc. at crucifixion of Christ. 3 Testified of rending of rock and earthquakes throughout world at Christ's death. 4. Said redemption came through Son of God.	1. 1 Ne.19:10 2. 1 Ne.19:11 3. 1 Ne.19:12 4. Alma 34:7
3. Jews-Israel	1. Spoke of persecution of Jews; gathering of Israel. 2. Lengthy allegory scattering, gathering of Israel. 3. Spoke of restoration of Lamanities to the gospel.	1. 1 Ne.19:13-16 2. Jacob 5-6:10 3. Hel.15:11
4. Teachings	1. Gave instructions concerning prayer or worship.	1. Alma 33:3

Reference: Robert J. Matthews. *Who's Who in the Book of Mormon*. Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1964, [Third Edition, March 1969], 67, sub-categories added).

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"[We] have something in the Book of Mormon that, if we did not have any other truth expressed in it, would be sufficient evidence of the divinity of this book. I have reference to the fifth chapter of Jacob. In this chapter we have a parable that nobody could have written unless he had the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord. It would be impossible. I think that as many as ninety-nine out of every hundred who read the Book of Mormon read this parable through without grasping the fullness and meaning of it. And I think this is one of the greatest passages in the Book of Mormon." (*Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966, [Second Printing], 203).

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"I do not think I overstate the matter when I say that next to Isaiah himself--who is the prototype, pattern, and model for all the prophets--there was not a greater prophet in all Israel than Zenos. And our knowledge of his inspired writings is limited to the quotations and paraphrasing summaries found in the Book of Mormon." ("The Doctrinal Restoration," in *The Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things*. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Robert L. Millet. Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1994, 17).

C. Why did Jacob include Zenos' lengthy allegory as part of his writings?

Scot Facer Proctor states,

"Zenos gave us 4,261 words in the Book of Mormon (of the total 289,329 words), which is about 2% of the text. His words are powerful, plain, and prophetic and need to be understood by members of the Church in our day and age. Hence this lesson on the Allegory of Zenos." ("Lesson 13 The Allegory of the Olive Tree Jacob 5-7," in *Meridian Magazine*, April 2004, www.meridianmagazine/contents/BM13).

I offer three possible reasons: (1) In Jacob 4, Jacob states "How is it possible that these [Jews], after having rejected the sure foundation [Jesus Christ], [how] can [they] ever build upon it[?] (Jacob 4:17). The allegory of Zenos is the Lord's answer to Jacob's question; (2) The allegory explains how both the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel, as well as the opportunity for the Gentiles to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ was known in advance. God the Father had a plan in place to address these significant events; and, (3) While many in the house of Israel had been rebellious and hardhearted in their rejection of Jesus Christ, He would not reject them. Through the effort, patience, and determination shown by Zenos' Lord of the vineyard, and his servant, those who become righteous will still receive their promised blessings.

Scot Facer Procter adds a another reason,

Mormon identifies Zenos as being of the tribe of Joseph of Egypt. (See 3 Nephi 10:15-16.) "So, Zenos (and Zenock) were

ancestors of this branch of the house of Joseph! No wonder they were interested in his words because he spoke specifically concerning them and those things that would come to pass in the lives of the Nephites and Lamanities, part of his [Jacob's] posterity." ("Lesson 13 The Allegory of the Olive Tree Jacob 5-7," in *Meridian Magazine*, April 2004, www.meridianmagazine/contents/BM13).

C. Why did Zenos choose an olive tree for his allegory?

Nephi, earlier in his record, made reference to the Lord using an olive tree to symbolize the house of Israel when he spoke to his brothers regarding how they might know that the truth of the words their father had spoken. (See 1 Nephi 15:12-14.) The choice of the olive tree was a natural symbol for its qualities were well known to those in the Middle East.

The Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's manual states,

- "a. The olive tree is a living thing that can produce much fruit. It requires constant nourishment to survive.
- "b. The olive branch is traditionally a symbol of peace.
- "c. The tree must be carefully pruned to be fruitful and productive.
- "d. For a wild olive tree to become tame and productive, its main stem must be cut back completely, and a branch from a tame olive tree must be grafted into the stem of the wild one.
- "e. An olive tree may produce fruit for centuries. Some trees now growing in Israel have been producing abundantly for over 400 years.
- "f. As a tree grows old and begins to die, its roots send up new shoots, which, if grafted and pruned, will mature to full-grown olive trees. Thus, the root of the tree may go on producing new trees and fruit for thousands of years." (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 59).

D. Meaning of Symbols in Zenos allegory

Chart 2: Zenos's Allegory of the Olive Trees Jacob 5-6:10

Symbol	Meaning
1. Vineyard.	1. The world.
2. Master of the vineyard.	2. Jesus Christ.
3. Tame olive trees.	3. The house of Israel, the Lord's covenant people.
4. Wild olive tree.	4. Gentiles (people not born into the house of Israel; later in allegory, the wild branches are apostate Israel).

Definition of Apostasy: Clearly, the Apostasy was not caused by a set of haphazard physical circumstances that God might have prevented. Prideful self-will brought about the Great Apostasy and brings about any other apostasy. Apostasy is an act of choosing self over direction and nourishment from the appropriate and righteous channels God has instituted. And because it is an act of agency, God does not prevent it. (Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch, eds. Paul Y. Hoskisson, "The Allegory of the Olive Tree in Jacob", in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5*. [Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book Co., Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1994], 93).

Chart 2 cont.

Symbol	Meaning
5. Branches.	5. Groups of people.
6. Roots of the tame olive tree.	6. The gospel covenant and promises made by God that constantly give life and substance to the tree.
7. Fruit.	7. Lives or works of people.
8. Servants.	8. Prophets and others called

<p>9. Digging, Pruning, Fertilizing</p>	<p>to serve.</p> <p>9. Lord's work with his children, which seeks to persuade them to be obedient and produce good fruit.</p>
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Ted L. Gibbons states,

"DUNG [Fertilize]--This word, as mentioned above, might be included with nourishing and digging, but using it separately gives me the chance to include...this favorite quote about dunging [see Jacob 5:47, 64, 76).

"On my way to visit the James's the other evening, I saw a wheat field that appeared to be greener and taller than the others. Thinking about it for awhile, I concluded that occasionally some loving farmer drives over the field with his tractor and pumps manure all over it. I thought, 'My, it's just like life. Here we are minding our own business, growing our little hearts out. We're really quite green somewhat productive and very sincere. When out of the blue, life deals us a dirty one, and we're up to our eyebrows in manure. We, of course, conclude that life as we have known it has just ended and will never be the same again. But one day, when the smell and the shock are gone, we find ourselves greener and more productive than we have been.' Unfortunately, no matter how often we go through these growing experiences, we are never able to appreciate the sound of the tractor or the smell of the manure. [Harold W. Wood]." (Ted L. Gibblons, "BOM Lesson 13 "The Allegory of the Olive Tree" Jacob 5-7. April, 2004, Internet, Ldsliving.com).

Chart 2 cont.

Symbol	Meaning
<p>10. Transplanting the branches.</p>	<p>10. Scattering of groups throughout the world, or restoring them to their original position.</p>
<p>11. Grafting.</p>	<p>11. The process of spiritual rebirth wherein one is joined to the covenant.</p>

12. Decaying branches.	12. Wickedness and apostasy.
13. Casting the branches into the fire.	13. The judgment of God.

Reference Chart 2. *Book of Mormon Student Manual Religion 121-122*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 140).

HE CLEAVETH UNTO YOU--We are invited by Jacob to have as much affection for the Lord as he has for us (6:5). He will not abandon us for some minor infraction of the rules. Pres. J Reuben Clark said, "I believe that his juridical concept of his dealings with his children could be expressed in this way: I believe that in his justice and mercy he will give us the maximum reward for our acts, give us all that he can give, and in the reverse, I believe that he will impose upon us the minimum penalty which it is possible for him to impose." (J. Reuben Clark, Jr., Conference Report, October 1953, p.84). (Ted L. Gibbons, "BOM Lesson 13 "The Allegory of the Olive Tree" Jacob 5-7. April, 2004, Internet, Ldsliving.com).

Concurrent within Zenos' allegory are seven time periods. In each of these time periods in the world's history, a part of the allegory occurred.

Chart 3. The Seven Time Periods of the Allegory

3-1	3-2	3-3
Verses 3-14 From Jacob to the end of the prophets. About 1800-400 B.C.	Verse 15. A long time passed away.	Verses 16-28 The Ministry of Jesus Christ. About A.D. 30-34.
A. Verses 3-5 The nourishing of the decaying olive tree-the house of Israel (Israel in Egypt) B. Verse 6. The main top begins to perish (the wilderness). C. Verse 7. The grafting in of the wild olive branches (Gentiles; Assyria, Babylon, etc.). D. Verses 8, 12-14 The grafting in of the natural branches into the nethermost	The end of the prophets to the ministry of Jesus Christ, about 400 B.C. to A.D.30.	A. Verses 16-18 The visit to the Gentile grafts-the Samaritans, etc. B. Verses 19-28. 1. The first (lost tribes) had produced good fruit. 2. The second (Jews) had produced good fruit. 3. The last had produced tame fruit (Nephites) and wild fruit (Lamanites).

pasts of the vineyard (dispersion of Israel). 1. Lost Tribes. 2. Jews. 3. Nephites and Lamanites. 4. People among all nations.		
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Chart 3 cont.

3-4	3-5	3-6	3-7
Verse 29 A long time passed away.	Verses 30-75 The Restoration, About A.D. 1820 to The Millennium.	Verse 76. A long time passed away.	Verse 77. The end of the earth.
From the apostasy Following the Ministry of Jesus Christ and His Apostles to the Restoration of the gospel through Joseph Smith, about A.D. 1820.	A. Verses 30-37. The visit to the Wild branch grafts (the Gentiles). No fruit is good, but the roots are alive, B. Verses 38-40. The visit to the natural branches of Israel, all corrupt. C. Verses 49-75. The grafting back of Israel into the mother trunk. 1. The roots (blood Of Israel among the Gentiles) preserved. 2. The natural Branches are grafted Back—the last to be the first. a. Lamanites. b. Jews. c. Lost Tribes	The Millennium 1,000 years.	A. The good and bad gathered together. The good preserved, The bad cast out. B. The vineyard burned with fire.

Reference: Monte S. Nyman. *Book of Mormon Commentary, Vol.2: These Records Are True*. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distributions, L.L.C., 2003, 100).

II. Jacob 5

Joseph Fielding Smith states the following regarding Zenos Allegory,

“In brief, it records the history of Israel down through the ages, the scattering of the tribes to all parts of the earth; their mingling with, or being grafted in, the wild olive trees, or in other words the mixing of the blood of

Israel among the Gentiles by which the great blessings and promises of the Lord to Abraham are fulfilled..

"This remarkable parable portrays how, as the branches of the olive tree (Israelites) were carried to all parts of the earth (the Lord's vineyard) and grafted into the wild olive trees (the Gentile nations). Thus they are fulfilling the promise that the Lord has made.

"Today Latter-day Saints are going to all parts of the world as servants in the vineyard to gather this fruit and lay it in store for the time of the coming of the Master." (*Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.4*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966, [Second Printing], 141-142).

Jacob 5:3

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

Zenos' allegory begins likening the house of Israel unto a tame olive-tree which had waxed old and had begun to decay.

The Book of Mormon Institute student manual states,

"The amazing quality of the [olive] tree is that as it finally does grow old and begin to die, the roots send up a number of new green shoots which, if grafted and pruned in regular fashion, will mature to full-grown olive trees again." (*Book of Mormon Student Manual Religion 121-122*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, [Second Edition, Revised, 1981], 140).

We will now be referring to Chart #3 by Monte S. Nyman of "The Seven Time Periods of the Allegory. 3-1a, the decaying of the olive tree represents the house of Israel during the time period of Jacob to the end of the prophets. About 1800-400 B.C. Israel is in Egypt.

Jacob 5:6

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

Referencing Chart #3-1b, the main top of the tree that is perishing refers to the time of Israel in the Sinai wilderness. Under the Lord's direction and Moses's tutelage, a great effort was made to get the idolatry of Egypt out of the minds of the children of Israel. After wandering for forty years, only two of the original company (Caleb and Joshua) will finish the journey and be completely committed to the Lord.

Jacob 5:7

7 And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard saw it [top beginning to perish], and he said to his servant: It grieveth me that I should lose this tree; wherefore, go and pluck the branches from a wild olivetree, 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.

Referencing Chart 3-1c, the grafting in of the wild olive branches represent the nations of the Gentiles; Assyria, Babylon, etc.).

Jacob 5:13-14

13 And these [natural olive branches] 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 nethermost parts of the vineyard, some in one and some in another, according to his will and pleasure.

3-1d, the grafting in of the natural branches into the nether most parts of the vineyard (dispersion of Israel), includes the Ten lost tribes; the righteous Jews who came to the Southern kingdom of Judah in 721 B.C., the Nephites and Mulekites who depart for a promised land in 600 B.C. and the people among all nations [Jaredites?] and the isles of the sea who previously had been led there by the Lord.

Jacob 5:15

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.

In reference to Chart #3, 3-2, the long time that passed away extends from the end of the prophets to the ministry of Jesus Christ, about 400 B.C. to A.D. 30.

Jacob 5:16-18

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 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.

Referring to Chart #3, 3-3, this period coincides with the ministry of Jesus Christ, or about A.D. 30-34. The visit to the Gentile grafts—the Samaritans, etc.

Jacob 5:19-20

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.

In reference Chart #3, 3-3b, the first that had brought forth much fruit, are the "Ten Lost Tribes."

Jacob 5:23

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.

In reference to Chart #3, 3-3b, the second group refers to the Jews who had produced good fruit. Certainly during Christ's ministry there were those in Israel who were not blinded by the traditions of their ancestors, and did receive the truths Jesus offered. There were even those who gave their lives for the truths they had received.

Jacob 5:25-27

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.

Chart #3, 3-3b, notes that the tame fruit refers to the Nephites and the wild fruit to the Lamanites. It is of interest to note that the concern of the Nephites throughout the Book of Mormon was to bring the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ to their Lamanite brethren. Most often the Lamanites were unreceptive to their efforts with a few exceptions, but they persisted. There was a time, prior to the appearance of the Savior, when the Lamanites had become righteous whereas the Nephites had become wicked. They then received a visit from Samuel, who was a righteous Lamanite, and who taught them from the city wall. (See Heleman 13-15.)

Jacob 5:29

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.

In Chart #3, 4-1, the second long time that passed away covers the period of the apostasy following the ministry of Jesus Christ and His apostles to the restoration of the gospel through Joseph Smith, about A.D. 1820.

Jacob 5:30, 32-34

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.

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 olivetree they have nourished the roots, that they are

alive and they have not perished; wherefore thou beholdest that they are yet good.

In Chart #3, 5-1a, notes that the visit to the wild branch grafts (the Gentiles) found that none of the fruit was good, but the roots were yet alive.

Jacob 5:38-40

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.

Chart #3, 5-1b, indicates that during the visit of the servant and the master to the nethermost part of the vineyard, they found the natural branches of the Israel were all corrupt. This indicates the extent to which even the righteous of the restored Church became prey to the wickedness that prevailed in the world in which they lived. It would appear that in comparison to the population at large, those who were righteous represented a very small number. Nephi saw in vision our days and recorded them.

1 Nephi 14:12

12 And it came to pass that I beheld the church of the Lamb of God, and its numbers were few, because of the wickedness and abominations of the whore who sat upon many waters; nevertheless, I beheld that the church of the Lamb, who were the saints of God, were also upon all the face of the earth; and their dominion upon the face of the earth were small, because of the wickedness of the great whore whom I saw.

Jacob 5:41

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?

In this verse, we are reminded of the great love that Our Father in Heaven and His Son, Jesus Christ, have for us. It is their desire that the Father's children return to live with Him again. He has done everything possible that could be done to bless his children. Unfortunately there are those individuals whose hearts are so set upon the things of this world that they ignore the promptings of the Spirit. While their response is grievous to the Father, He will not force anyone to do something that they do not desire to do themselves. He will not violate our free agency, even if ultimately, our choices will have dire consequences upon our progression.

Jacob 5:54

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 the branches of this tree, and graft them in unto them. Yea, I will graft in unto them the branches of their mother tree, and 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.

Chart #3, 5-1c, the master and servant now begin the process of trying to graft Israel back into the mother trunk. Their purpose is so that the roots (blood of Israel among the Gentiles) may be preserved.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"The roots are good. To the missionaries of the latter days the Lord has said: 'Ye are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect,' for, the Lord explained, 'mine elect hear my voice and harden not their hearts' (D&C 29:7). For theirs was a 'believing blood.' 'What then is believing blood? It is the blood that flows in the veins of those who are the literal seed of Abraham—not that the

blood itself believes, but that those born in that lineage have both the right and a special spiritual capacity to recognize, receive, and believe the truth. The term is simply a beautiful, a poetic, and a symbolic way of referring to the seed of Abraham to whom the promises were made. It identifies those who developed in the pre-existence the talent to recognize the truth and to desire righteousness.' (Bruce R. McConkie. *New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 38-39; *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 61).

It is "the believing blood" found among the members of the literal seed of Abraham, and consequently the righteous members of the house of Israel, that the master and the servant in the vineyard seeks to nurture.

Jacob 5:63

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.

In Chart #3, 5-1c, the natural branches are grafted back--- the last to be first, a. Lamanites, b. Jews, c. Lost Tribes.

Jacob 5:65

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.

Similar to the Lord's parable of the wheat and tares, it is only when the roots are sufficiently strong that the branches that bring forth the bitter fruit can be removed. If the pruning occurs when the roots are not of sufficient strength, then the whole tree will be lost.

Jacob 5:70-71

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 [servants]: 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.

The time in which we now live is considered the latter days. Those who labor in the Lord's vineyard in order to bring the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ to those in the world will be blessed for the service they have rendered.

Jacob 5:76

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.

The third long period of time in Chart #3, 6-1, corresponds with the Millennium of 1000 years. During this time, the veil between heaven and earth will be thin and the work for both the living and the dead will proceed at a rapid rate. The gross wickedness that prevailed prior to the commencement of the Millennium will no longer exist among the inhabitants of the earth. The kingdom of God will now replace the governments of man. The peace so many have prayed for and earnestly sought will now prevail upon the earth.

Jacob 5:77

77 And when the time cometh that the 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.

According to Chart #3, 7-1, the last event in the allegory represents the end of our earth. First, Satan will join with his forces in battle against the forces of Christ, led by Michael [Adam]. The forces of Satan will be defeated and Satan will be driven out. The earth will then be cleansed of all iniquity by fire and will receive its Celestial glory.

III. Jacob 6

In these initial verses, Jacob pronounces his witness. He gives his concluding words regarding the allegory of Zenos that he has just written for those who will read his words.

Jacob 6:1-2

1 And now, behold, my brethren, as I said unto you that I would prophesy, behold, this is my prophecy--- that the things which the prophet Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, in which he likened them unto a tame olive-tree, must surely come to pass. 2 And the day that he shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people, is the day, yea, even 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.

Jacob now adds his witness to the words of Zenos regarding the events that will occur. Our perspective differs. Many of the events Zenos saw in vision and Jacob gave his witness, we have been able to confirm through the scriptural records, ancient and modern. Those of us who live in the latter days have scriptural evidence for almost five of the seven time periods of the allegory. We should not doubt the fulfillment of the remaining periods will yet occur.

Jacob 6:3

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.

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"In this verse, Jacob bestows a benediction upon the servants of the Lord who have been zealous and who persevered in His service in the vineyard of the Lord. It reminds us of the words of the angel, who, in speaking for the Lord, said to Nephi, 'And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost; and if they endure unto the end they shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall be saved in the everlasting kingdom of the lamb;...' (1 Nephi 13:37)" (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.1*. Edited and arranged by Philip C. Reynolds. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1955, [1976], 484).

Jacob 6:4

4 And how merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches; and he stretches forth his hands unto them all the day long; and they are a stiffnecked and a gainsaying people; but as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God.

Jacob extols the merciful nature of our God as He remembers those of the house of Israel and his untiring efforts to bring his children into the fold of his righteousness. He also recognizes that those who are stiffnecked, gainsaying, and hardhearted, who unless they humble themselves and become submissive to the word of the Lord, will not enter into his presence.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"To say that Israel is 'a gainsaying people,' is to say that they are quick to object, to oppose, resist, contradict, or speak against that which comes from God. They are slow to believe, quick to disbelieve." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 78).

Jacob 6:5-6

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

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

With these words, and continuing through verse nine, Jacob speaks with clarity and full purpose of heart as he raises his voice in warning. His words are directed to those who refuse to humble themselves and continue to reject the words of God. He concludes by warning them regarding their final judgment.

Jacob 6:10

10 And according to the power of justice, for justice cannot be denied, 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.

Joseph Smith states,

"The great misery of departed spirits in the world of spirits, where they go after death, is to know that they come short of the glory that others enjoy and that they might have enjoyed themselves, and they are their own accusers... A man is his own tormenter and [therefore also] his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into a lake that burns with fire and brimstone. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*. Compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, [1977], 310-311; 357).

Jacob 6:12

12 O be wise; what can I say more?

Jacob has borne witness of the blessings that a merciful God seeks to bestow upon us if we will humble ourselves and be

submissive to his word. He has also raised his voice of warning to those who chose to reject His plan of salvation and by doing so they then align themselves with Satan and become his servants.

Joseph Fielding Smith and Robert L. Millet state,

"...to read the signs of the times in our day is to make a decision in favor of the society of Zion and the Church of the Lamb of God (see 1 Nephi 14:10)---this in contrast to a decision to enter or perpetuate Babylon. Each city---Zion and Babylon---make definite requirements of its citizens, and as the time approaches the millennial day each of these communities will insist upon the total devotion and consecration of its citizenry. To read the signs of the times is to recognize that in the future fewer and fewer individuals will be 'lukewarm' Latter-day Saints; that the myopic and misguided of the religious world will grow in cynicism and confusion; that the ungodly will, as time goes by, sink ever deeper into despair known only to those who revel in iniquity; that wickedness will widen and malevolence multiply until the citizens of Babylon seal themselves to him who is the father of all lies.

"To read the signs of the times is also to become aware that 'Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments' (D&C 82:14); that the Church of the Lamb shall continue to require the tithes, offerings, and donations of its members,' the full energies of the Saints, 'until that day when a full and consecrated life is required; and that through giving all to the Lord through his Church, the Saints of the Most High shall establish a heaven on earth and eventually receive the glorious assurance of exaltation in the highest heaven.'" (*Sustaining and Defending the Faith*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985, 32-33).

Jacob 6:13

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 will meet each of us at the judgment bar of God. He, like Nephi before him (2 Nephi 33:7, 11), and Mormon (Mormon 3:18-22), and Moroni (Moroni 10:27) after him, each leave their witness to us that he will be there to declare the truthfulness of his message. This meeting to the wicked

with be awful and dreadful, while for the righteous, it will be a time of rejoicing. It is now, though our actions, intent of our hearts, and desires, that we make our choice.

IV. Jacob 7 [Sherem]

This is the final chapter written by Jacob upon the plates as recorded in the Book of Mormon. The central theme is Jacob's interaction with a man named Sherem.

Jacob 7:1-3

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; and this he did that he might overthrow the doctrine of Christ.

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.

Sherem's purpose in speaking to the people of Nephi, and directly with Jacob, was to declare that there was no Christ. It seems he was familiar with the doctrine of Christ whereby the Son of God would come to earth and through his atonement, all would live again. He also opened the way for all mankind, through individual obedience, to return to live with the Father. By the means of flattery and cunning speech, Sherem had been successful in convincing many of the truth of his words.

Jacob 7:4

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.

Ezra Taft Benson states

The first purpose of the Book of Mormon is to testify of Jesus Christ...“of His divinity and of the necessity for a

Redeemer...[bearing] witness of the Fall and Atonement and the first principles of the gospel, including our need of a broken heart and a contrite spirit and a spiritual rebirth...[and enduring] to the end in righteousness...

"Second, the Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Nephi 3:12.) It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil of our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon is similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time." (*A Witness and A Warning*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988, 3).

Jacob 7:6-7

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. And after this manner did Sherem contend against me.

Let us note some important falsehoods in Sherem's premise: (1) He accuses Jacob of leading away the people "that they pervert the right way of God" (Jacob 7:7). Jacob could also make the same claim against Sherem. Freedom of speech was the law of the land at the time of the Nephites. (See Alma 29:12.)

(2) Sherem sets himself up as the sole judge of right and wrong teachings. His are correct; all others are wrong.

(3) While he claims to understand the doctrine of Christ, he does not understand that the law of Moses was given by

Jehovah [Pre-mortal-Jesus Christ] to the children of Israel in order to teach them of His sacrifice and atonement that was to come. The law of Moses was given as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. (See Galatians 3:24.)

(4) Sherem declares that "no man can tell of things to come" (Jacob 7:7). In other words, because Sherem does not know, he concludes that no one else can know either, including Jacob.

Jacob 7:9

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.

Sherem is adamant that he has all the knowledge and, therefore, if he does not know there is a Christ, then no one else can know it either, and neither can Jacob.

Jacob 7:10

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

Jacob seeks to base his discussion with Sherem on something they can both agree on as providing additional support to his position of belief. Their common belief in the scriptures provides a common ground.

Jacob 7:11

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.

Jacob has told Sherem that the scriptures, of which he believes, testify of Christ. All the prophets have written or spoken concerning this individual whom you know does not exist.

Jacob 7:12

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.

Not only does Jacob have the witness from all the prophets as recorded in the scriptures, regarding the coming of Jesus Christ, but he also has a personal testimony of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost has also borne witness to him of the drastic effects on all mankind if an atonement is not made by Jesus Christ.

Jacob 7:13

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.

Frustrated by the words of the scriptures and the personal witness of Jacob, Sherem now wants Jacob to produce a viable sign that can be known by his senses that Jacob is speaking the truth.

Neal A. Maxwell states,

"Such erring individuals or generations also have a strong preference for meeting the needs of 'me' over attending to others, a lifestyle which speeds selfishness on its endless empty journey.

"By making demands of God, the proud would attach conditions to their discipleship. But discipleship requires of us unconditional surrender to the Lord. Hence the proud neither understand nor really love God. Therefore they violate the first commandment by seeing God as a sign provider upon request; as a function, not a tutoring Father." (*Sermons Not Spoken*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985, 59).

Robert L. Millet adds,

"Sign seekers have one thing going for them when it comes to convincing an audience--the servants of the Lord will not stoop to cheap theatrics to win the hearts of

observers. In fact, 'faith cometh not by signs but signs follow those that believe. Yea, signs come by faith, not by the will of men, nor as they please, but by the will of God' (D&C 63:9-10). That is to say, signs and miracles fan the flame already burning in the hearts of the believers." ("Sherem the Anti-Christ," in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob Through the Words Of Mormon, Vol.4*. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Study Center, Brigham Young University, 1990, 182).

Jacob 7:15-16

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.

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.

We may ask, what experience could Sherem have had after falling to the earth that would lead him to believe that he was going to die and that his final request would be to speak to the people? While we do not know regarding his experience, the Book of Mormon does record the testimony of a young man named Alma who had a similar experience. His father, Alma was a prophet of God, however, Alma and the four sons of King Mosiah went about misleading the people. Alma the younger was confronted by an angel and was left in a coma for three days. He later described his experience during this time to his son, Heleman.

Alma 36:11-13

11 And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did not hear them; for when I heard the words---If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God---I was struck with such great fear and amazement lest perhaps I should be destroyed, that I fell to the earth and I did hear no more.

12 But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

13 Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

It is not unreasonable to assume that Sherem may also have had a similar experience. Upon gaining consciousness, he sought to obtain some relief from his inner pain and guilt through public confession.

Jacob 7:17-18

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 confesses that he was deceived by the power of the devil. Does the devil have power to deceive? Yes, most certainly, he does. One of the purposes for which we are upon the earth is for us to be tried and tested. The devil and his minions serve that purpose in Heavenly Father's plan.

Brigham Young states,

"...many think that the Devil has rule and power over both body and spirit. Now, I want to tell you that he does not hold any over man, only so far as the body overcomes the spirit that is in man, through [he/she] yielding to the spirit of evil...If [your] spirit yields to the body, the Devil then has power to overcome the body and spirit of that man,...

However, Brigham Young adds, giving each of us hope, "When you are tempted, buffeted, and step out of the way inadvertently; where you are overcome with a fault, or commit an overt act unthinkingly; when you are full of evil passion, and wish to yield to it, then stop and let the spirit, which God has put into your tabernacle, take the lead. If you do that, I will promise that you will overcome all evil, and obtain eternal lives." (*Discourses of Brigham*

Young. Compiled by John A. Widtsoe. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1954, [Edition of 1961], 69-70).

Jacob 7:19-20

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.

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

Joseph Fielding Smith and Robert L. Millet state,

"Though the ultimate fate of Sherem is not known to us--- whether, for instance, he will come forth in the resurrection to the terrestrial or the telestial kingdom--- this we do know: deathbed repentance does not have within it the seeds of everlasting life. His sin is not unpardonable---he will not be numbered among the sons of perdition---for he still possessed a soul capable of repentance, which disposition is wholly alien to a son of perdition (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 358)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 90).

As we conclude Jacob's discussion of his encounter with Sherem, I wish to provide for the sake of the reader a list of some of the characteristics common to one who is determined to overthrow the doctrine of Christ.

Robert L. Millet states,

- "(1) They Deny the Need for Jesus Christ.
- "(2) They Use Flattery to Win Disciples.
- "(3) They Accuse the Brethren [Leaders of the Church] of Teaching False Doctrine.
- "(4) They Have a Limited View of Reality.
- "(5) They Have a Disposition to Misread and Thereby Misrepresent the Scriptures.

"(6) They are Sign Seekers."

("Sherem the Anti-Christ," in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob Through Words of Mormon, Vol.4*. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1990, 176-183).

Jacob 7:21-22

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.

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

The final words of Sherem had a powerful effect upon those who were gathered. In response to the prayer of a faithful prophet, they were overcome by the Spirit. It would appear that like Sherem, they too became aware of their own sins and inclination to do evil. We would sense that they, like another community of believers were overcome as, "the fear of the Lord had come upon them...[for] they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth..." (Mosiah 4:1-2).

Jacob 7:23

23 And it came to pass that peace and the love of God was restored again among the people; and they searched the scriptures, and hearkened no more to the words of this wicked man.

The effects of this "spiritual experience" as they felt the power of the spirit upon their lives, led them to action and to make some necessary changes in their lives. As the love of God increased in their community, a spirit of peace returned along with their searching of the scriptures.

Jacob 7:24

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 to destroy us continually.

One of the common effects of having felt the spirit by an individual is an increased desire to share the truths of the gospel with others. In this instance, any renewed effort on the part of the community, to reach out in faith to the Lamanites was met by them with continued rejection and yet further attacks.

Jacob 7:26

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, wherefore, I conclude this record, declaring that I have written according to the best of my knowledge, by saying that the time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanders, 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.

Joseph Fielding Smith and Robert L. Millet state,

"How poetic and descriptive Jacob is in describing the fleeting moments and hours of our mortal probation! Moments blend into hours, hours into days, days into years, and years into decades. Because our stay here is temporary; because the day of probation is over in an instant, as it were; because our handling of time will determine largely our place and station in eternity---for these reasons, the prophets continually plead for the people of the earth to guard their time, to improve their time, and to make wise use of their time.

"The life of the Nephites was, during the greater part of their history, one of loneliness and heartache. They sought endlessly to teach and persuade and love their brethren, the Lamanites, but...[with only limited] success. In addition, the Nephites, like all the faithful in all ages, were 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth' (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:11; D&C 45:13)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 92).

Jacob concludes his record by indicating that he would soon die. He, therefore, was giving the plates to his son, Enos, with the command that he would now write upon them. Though he states, his "writing has been small", it is his desire that "many of my brethren may read my words" (Jacob 7:27).

Jeffrey R. Holland states,

"When all else is said and done, it is ultimately this powerful relationship with the Savior--including the magnificence of open vision and of hearing 'the voice of the Lord speaking unto me in very word, from time to time'--that makes Jacob the unshakable one. It is this that makes Jacob that 'man of Christ' who is built upon 'a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall' (Helaman 3:29, 5:12)." ("Jacob the Unshakable," in *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 43).

V. Conclusions

As we conclude our focus upon these three chapters our understanding has been expanded.

In Chapter 5, through Zenos allegory of the tame olive tree, we have come to an ever greater appreciation of the love that Our Father in Heaven has for his children. Knowing that even some of those who had been valiant in the pre-existence would stray, he incorporated into his plan a way in which even the rebellious would be given an opportunity to repent and again receive their promised blessings. How beautifully this was expressed in Zenos' allegory. While it took additional time in order to understand its details more fully, through the chart prepared by Monte S. Nyman, further understanding became available.

In Chapter 6, Jacob spoke to those who would live righteous lives as well as to those who would reject the Father's plan. With the sincere love expressed by a prophet, Jacob continued to reach out to those who would reject his words. He made it clear the eternal effects their rejection would have upon their eternal progression if they chose not to repent. His words may also be directed to those who are "lukewarm," and not yet fully committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ and its teachings. As noted by Joseph Fielding

McConkie and Robert L. Millet, both "Zion and Babylon--- make definite requirements of its citizens, and as the time approaches the millennial day each of these communities will insist upon the total and consecration of its citizenry." (*Sustaining and Defending the Faith*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985, 32). It is important that we choose now to plant our roots deep in Zion and prepare for the pending storm.

Chapter 7 is such an important chapter in the Book of Mormon as we are introduced to Sherem, the Anti-Christ. Sherem is the first of three Anti-Christ's to whom we will be introduced. Why? Because as Ezra Taft Benson states, one of the purposes for which the Book of Mormon was written was "to expose the enemies of Christ. [It is designed to fortify] the humble follower of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil of our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon is similar to the type we have today." (*A Witness and A Warning*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988, 3). We learned much from how Jacob addressed his meeting with Sherem and the ultimate results.

I am especially grateful to Jacob for his writings. He is able to articulate both the warning and the great love that Our Father and His Son, have for each of us. I hope to be among those who are "steadfast and immoveable" in my testimony so that when I meet Jacob at the Judgment, I may express my gratitude to him for his "writing [that] has been small" (Jacob 7:27), had a positive effect upon my life.

Our next lesson [BM#14] is entitled, "For a Wise Purpose." Our focus will be upon the writings of Enos, Jarom, Omni and the Words of Mormon.