

Lesson Highlights

- *Jacob quotes Zenos allegory of the olive trees.*
- *Jacob exhorts his listeners to repent and follow Christ.*

A study of this lesson will help us better understand Zenos's allegory of the olive trees and how it applies in our day.

Next Week:

Lesson 14:
"For a Wise Purpose"
 Enos, Jarom, Omni,
 Words of Mormon

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Introduction

Write down as many things about an olive tree as you can think of in one minute.



This lesson discusses how the olive tree was used as a symbol to describe the Lord's dealings with the house of Israel.

Jacob quoted Zenos's allegory of the olive trees.

In this chapter Jacob quotes an allegory from Zenos, a Hebrew prophet mentioned several times in the Book of Mormon. An allegory is a literary device in which one object or event is used to describe or represent another. Zenos's allegory uses olive trees to summarize Israel's history and foretell its destiny.

Let's review the symbols Zenos used in this allegory and the meanings of these symbols:

Zenos' Allegory

Symbol	Meaning
Vineyard	The World
Master of the Vineyard	Jesus Christ
Tame Olive Tree	The House of Israel, the Lord's Covenant People
Wild Olive Tree	Gentiles (people not born into the house of Israel)
Branches	Groups of People
Servants	Prophets and Others Called to Serve
Fruit	Lives or Works of People

Jacob 5:3-4 The allegory begins with the master of the vineyard finding that his tame olive tree is beginning to decay. This decay represents Apostasy.

Jacob 5:4-14 When the master of the vineyard found his tame olive tree decaying, he pruned, cultivated, and nourished it. When that failed to save the tree from its decaying "main top", he decided to graft in portions of a wild olive tree.

Jacob 5:11, 18 Grafting is a process in which part of a second plant is joined to a first plant in such a way that it becomes a permanent part of the first plant. The master asked the servant to graft in some wild branches to save the tree and allow it to correct its decay.

Grafting in this allegory represents bringing Gentiles into the house of Israel through baptism. **Acts 10** records when the gospel was first taken to the Gentiles by the apostles after the departure of the Resurrected Christ.

1 Nephi 10:12-13 The scattering of the House of Israel is represented by transplanting the tame branches into distant parts of the vineyard.

1 Nephi 2:19-20; 1 Nephi 22:3-4 Specific groups these tame branches represent include Lehi and Ishmael's families along with others who would be led away from Jerusalem.

Amos 9:8-9 Israel was scattered to be sifted among other nations.

The master of the vineyard repeatedly worked with his servant to prune, dig about, and nourish his tree. This suggests much about Jesus Christ's involvement in the lives of His people...that he is actively and very personally involved in trying to bring about their salvation.

Jacob 5:15-18 When the master visited the vineyard for the second time, he discovered that the wild branches that were grafted into the tree so that it was now bearing tame fruit in abundance. The bearing of good fruit symbolizes the accomplishment of good works. From this illustration we see that new converts add life and strength to the Church.

Jacob 5:19-25 The master found when he visited the natural (tame) branches he had planted in various places around the vineyard that the branches planted in poor ground brought forth good fruit, while the branches planted in good ground yielded both good and wild fruit. Ponder what application these situations might have for us today.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: *"I do not think I overstate the matter when I say that next to Isaiah himself... 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 Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things, p17)

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the allegory of the olive trees.

- What principles from this extensive allegory can be applied to your life?

Jacob 5:29-32, 37-42 When the master visited the vineyard the third time, he found that all the fruit from the natural tree that had had wild branches grafted in had turned bad and become corrupted. The many kinds of corrupt fruit symbolizes universal apostasy.

Jacob 5:37, 40, 48 The apostasy was caused by "loftiness" of the branches overcoming the roots. The "loftiness" of the vineyard symbolized pride. Think about how our own loftiness, or pride, might prevent us from bearing good fruit--doing the good works the Lord requires of us and bringing others to the gospel.

Jacob 5:41, 47 The master's response to his corrupted vineyard--his weeping and obvious grief--tells us about the Lord's feelings for His people. Ponder how knowing that the Lord loves you makes a difference in your life.

Other verses that illustrate the Lord's love for us include:

- "I will prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it, that...it perish not" (**Jacob 5:4**).
- "It grieveth me that I should lose this tree" (**Jacob 5:7**).
- "What shall we do unto the tree, that I may preserve again good fruit thereof unto mine own self?" (**Jacob 5:33**).
- "I may have joy again in the fruit of my vineyard" (**Jacob 5:60**).

Jacob 5:49-54, 58, 62-64 To save his corrupted vineyard, the master decided to nourish and prune the vineyard once more and graft some of the transplanted branches back into the original tree.

1 Nephi 10:14; 2 Nephi 29:14; D&C 33:3-6 This final nourishing, pruning, and grafting represents the Restoration of the gospel and the gathering of scattered Israel.

D&C 133:8 The "other servants" mentioned in Jacob 5:61, Jacob 5:70 are the elders (missionaries) of the Church.

Jacob 5:71-75 Although these servants are few, the results of their efforts were great. The vineyard was saved as the bad was cast out and the natural fruit was restored as a balance was achieved between the roots and the branches.

We can help in this final nourishing, pruning, and grafting in the Lord's vineyard as we proclaim the gospel to all those within our circle of influence and as we support the missionaries in the worldwide mission fields.



Olive Vineyard

Jacob exhorted his listeners to repent and follow Christ.

Jacob 6:1 After relating Zenos's allegory, Jacob prophesied that the allegory would come to pass.

Jacob 6:2 The time period Jacob referred to in this verse is the latter days. Obviously, this tells us that Zenos's allegory is quite relevant to us.

Jacob 6:4-5 These verses teach that the Savior will recover Israel in the last days by extending an invitation to all who will accept the gospel and bear good fruit (do good works).

Jacob 6:3-13 Gospel principles Jacob emphasized after testifying that the events in Zenos's allegory would all come to pass include God's mercy, the reward for faithful service, the humility required to accept the gospel, the

necessity of repentance and whole-hearted acceptance of the gospel, the need to listen to the promptings and teachings of God and his messengers, the requirement to endure to the end, and the counsel to be wise.

Jacob 6:11-12; Moroni 6:3-4 Responsibilities of those who "have been nourished by the good word of God" include being obedient, walking in the strait and narrow way, enduring to the end, and being wise. Specific ways in which we can fulfill these responsibilities include inviting our nonmember friends to talk with the missionaries, serving diligently as home teachers and visiting teachers, and couples serving full-time missions together.

Conclusion

President Joseph Fielding Smith said, *"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, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957-66], 4:142). We should participate in this great gathering. Because we have been nourished by the Lord, we are obligated to help others receive this nourishment.