

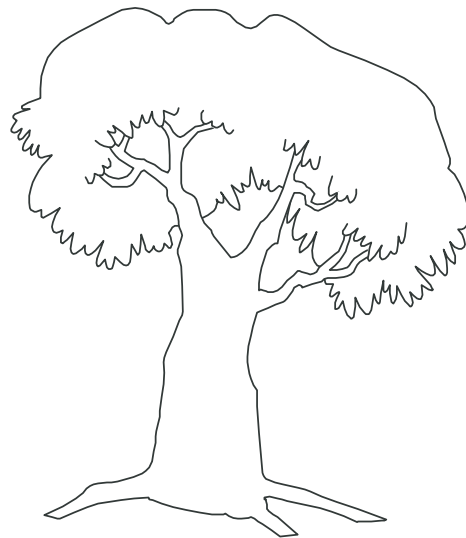
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Web site "[nathanolsen.com](http://nathanolsen.com)"

Next Weeks Lesson: Lesson 14 "For a Wise Purpose" ([Enos](#), [Jarom](#), [Omni](#), [Words of Mormon](#))

Today's Lesson: Lesson 13 "The Allegory of the Olive Trees" ([Jacob 5-7](#))

Tell me as many things about an olive tree as you can think of in one minute. Write your answers on the handout around the illustration.



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

**1. Jacob quotes Zenos's allegory of the olive trees. ([Jacob 5](#))**

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.

**A.** What symbols did Zenos use in this allegory? What are the meanings of these symbols?

ZENOS'S ALLEGORY	
<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Vineyard	
Master of the vineyard	
Tame olive tree	
Wild olive tree	
Branches	

Servants	
Fruit	

- B.** The allegory begins with the master of the vineyard finding that his tame olive tree is beginning to decay ([Jacob 5:3-4](#)). What does this decay represent? What did the master of the vineyard do when he found his tame olive tree decaying? (See [Jacob 5:4-14](#).) Why did the master ask the servant to graft in some wild branches? (See [Jacob 5:11](#), [Jacob 5:18](#).)
- C.** What does grafting represent in this allegory? When was the gospel first taken to the Gentiles? (See [Acts 10](#).)
- D.** What is represented by transplanting the tame branches into distant parts of the vineyard? (See [1 Nephi 10:12-13](#).) What specific groups might these tame branches represent? (See [1 Nephi 2:19-20](#); [1 Nephi 22:3-4](#).) Why was Israel scattered? (See [Amos 9:8-9](#).)
- E.** The master of the vineyard repeatedly worked with his servant to prune, dig about, and nourish his tree. What does this suggest about Jesus Christ's involvement in the lives of His people?
- F.** When the master visited the vineyard for the second time, what did he discover about the wild branches that were grafted into the tame tree? (See [Jacob 5:15-18](#).) What does the bearing of good fruit symbolize? How can new converts add life and strength to the Church?
- G.** What did the master find when he visited the natural (tame) branches he had planted in various places around the vineyard? (See [Jacob 5:19-25](#). Note: The branches planted in poor ground brought forth good fruit, while the branches planted in good ground yielded both good and wild fruit.) What application might these situations have for us today?
- H.** When the master visited the vineyard the third time, what had happened to all the fruit? (See [Jacob 5:29-32](#), [Jacob 5:37-42](#).) What do the many kinds of corrupt fruit symbolize? What caused the apostasy? (See [Jacob 5:37](#), [Jacob 5:40](#), [Jacob 5:48](#).) What might the "loftiness" of the vineyard symbolize? How can our own loftiness, or pride, prevent us from bearing good fruit?
- I.** What does the master's response to his corrupted vineyard tell us about the Lord's feelings for His people? (See [Jacob 5:41](#), [Jacob 5:47](#).) How does knowing that the Lord loves you make a difference in your life?

Below are some other verses that illustrate the Lord's love for us:

(1) "I will prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it, that ... it perish not" ([Jacob 5:4](#)).

- (2) “It grieveth me that I should lose this tree” ([Jacob 5:7](#)).
- (3) “What shall we do unto the tree, that I may preserve again good fruit thereof unto mine own self?” ([Jacob 5:33](#)).
- (4) “I may have joy again in the fruit of my vineyard” ([Jacob 5:60](#)).

J. What did the master decide to do to save his corrupted vineyard? (See [Jacob 5:49-54](#), [Jacob 5:58](#), [Jacob 5:62-64](#).) What does this final nourishing, pruning, and grafting represent? (See [1 Nephi 10:14](#); [2 Nephi 29:14](#); [D&C 33:3-6](#).)

K. Who are the “other servants” mentioned in [Jacob 5:61](#), [Jacob 5:70](#)? (See [D&C 133:8](#).) Although these servants are few, what are the results of their efforts? (See [Jacob 5:71-75](#).) How can we help in this final nourishing, pruning, and grafting in the Lord’s vineyard?

## 2. Jacob exhorts his listeners to repent and follow Christ. ([Jacob 6](#))

A. What did Jacob prophesy after relating Zenos’s allegory? (See [Jacob 6:1](#).) What time period did Jacob refer to in [Jacob 6:2](#)? What does this tell us about the relevance of Zenos’s allegory to us?

B. [Jacob 6:4-5](#). What do these verses teach about how the Savior will recover Israel in the last days?

C. What gospel principles did Jacob emphasize after testifying that the events in Zenos’s allegory would all come to pass? (See [Jacob 6:3-13](#).) What are the responsibilities of those who “have been nourished by the good word of God”? (See [Jacob 6:11-12](#); [Moroni 6:3-4](#).) What are some specific ways we can fulfill these responsibilities? (Every member of the Church can fulfill these responsibilities. For example, we can invite our nonmember friends to talk with the missionaries, we can serve diligently as home teachers and visiting teachers, and couples can serve full-time missions together.)

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.

## 3. Sherem’s false teachings ([Jacob 7:1-23](#))

A. How did Sherem lead many people away from the truth? (See [Jacob 7:1-7](#).) What evidence do you see that some people today use similar methods to lead others away from Christ?

- B.** How was Jacob able to confound Sherem? (See [Jacob 7:8-22](#).) How can we protect ourselves from the deceptions of anti-Christ? (See [Jacob 7:23](#); [Romans 16:17-18](#); [Ephesians 4:11-15](#).)

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: “*There is not anything in this world of as great importance to us as obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us search these scriptures. Let us know what the Lord has revealed. Let us put our lives in harmony with his truth. Then we will not be deceived*” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954-56], 1:301).

#### **4. Additional information about olive trees**

The more we know about olive trees, the better we can understand why Zenos was inspired to use this particular tree to symbolize Israel:

- 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.