

## Allegory of the Olive Tree

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Okay, we'll start.

The only people who will be saved are Israel. Period. Hopefully, by the time we get done with this, you'll understand better what that means.

In the valley of Adam-ondi-Ahman, when the first great get-together that was attended by the Lord took place, Adam offered a prophecy, when he was foretelling everything that would happen to his posterity down to the end of time, and it included the statement that *this same Priesthood which was in the beginning shall be in the end of the world also* (Genesis 3:14). So that seems like an interesting thing, and it seems like it's, you know, related to, maybe, someone performing ordinances or something like that. But it's a little more expansive a statement than just limited to what we regard as a priestly function.

The initial genealogical tracking of the patriarchs through the book of Genesis came to an end at the time of Shem (who was given a new name of Melchizedek), because following him, there were generations that fell away from the truth. It wasn't until Abraham came to Melchizedek and became an heir that could likewise perpetuate what had been there in the beginning that the line resumed again. More so, perhaps, for us than Adam, Abraham represents a prototype, because he comes out of apostasy, and he secures himself back in the line and becomes a patriarch. And he does so through adoption, which is the way that latter-day Israel is gonna be reassembled. Abraham had this promise given to him by the Lord:

*I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you above measure, and make your name great among **all nations**.*

...which sounds interesting in the context of Abraham's life, because "all nations" would include people over the horizon and far away, some of whom he'd only heard of distantly. And now the promise is that "your name is gonna be great among **all nations**."

*And you shall be a blessing unto your seed after you, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto [and again] **all nations**. And I will bless them through your name, for as many as receive **this gospel**...*

And now he's talking about something incredibly specific and comprehensive and big that resembles what had been in the possession of Adam and Eve at the beginning and handed down through the line of the patriarchs. So "this gospel," anyone that receives it,

*...shall be called after your name and shall be accounted your **seed**...*

..."seed" being genealogical, familial, the same sort of thing that the outline of the patriarch lineage is designed to define or clarify. He's saying, "They're gonna be your seed."

*...and shall rise up and bless you, as unto their Father.*

Distant nations, people over the horizon, including ALL of them, are gonna call you, Abraham, their father.

*And I will bless them that bless you and curse them that curse you. And in you (that is, in your Priesthood) and in your seed (that is, [in] your Priesthood) — for I give unto you a promise that this right shall continue in you and in your seed after you (that is to say, the literal seed or seed of the body) — shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of [eternal life]. (Abraham 3:1, emphasis added)<sup>1</sup>*

So Abraham not only secures the initiation/ordination that Melchizedek could administer, [but] independent of that, just like the patriarchs, where they get ordained at one point and they encounter God at some point later (Enoch, for example, was conferred priesthood at age 20, and it was at 65 that he encountered the Lord; so there was this 45-year gap between the time of ordination and the time of the Lord visiting with him), the promise that Abraham received did not coincide with the moment that he was receiving initiation into the order that Melchizedek had. So Abraham now is in a covenantal relationship directly with God and an inheritor, also, of the patriarchal descendancy.

After him, the Lord told Sarah about her son, Isaac. And God said:

*Sarah, your, wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac. And I will establish my covenant with him...for an everlasting covenant with his seed after him. (Genesis 7:33)*

So Isaac is designated as someone that would likewise receive the same status. And directly to Isaac, God said:

*Unto you and unto your seed I will give all these countries. And I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham your father. And I will make your seed to multiply as the stars of heaven and will give unto your seed all these countries. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. (Genesis 9:4)*

So now the Scriptures are talking about the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac because it is the same relationship that God restores in Isaac—through covenant and direct communication—the link that was intended to have been preserved from the beginning. And then after him, his son, Jacob. God said unto him:

*Your name is Jacob. Your name shall not be called anymore Jacob, but Israel should be your name. And he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply. A nation and a company of nations shall be of you, and kings shall come out of your loins. And the land[s] which I*

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<sup>1</sup> All citations are from the Restoration Edition of the Scriptures unless otherwise identified.

*gave [to] Abraham and Isaac, to you I will give it, and to your seed after you will I give the land. (Ibid. ¶55)*

So now it is the “God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” and the Scriptures are clear—because that is a covenantal relationship that that title gets used. It’s not the “God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” We sometimes refer to Him as that, but it is the “God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” that enters into these relationships.

Well, Israel has been scattered, sent to every corner of the earth and lost, because most of Israel (the ten tribes) are called the *lost* ten tribes. So, I mean, when we refer to the lost tribes of Israel (the majority—the overwhelming majority—of Israel), we’re simply saying that they’re gone. Well, Lehi had something to say about the phenomenon of what will happen to Israel; and Lehi—trying to convince his posterity about what the future was going to hold—begins to tell them about the necessity of what THEY were going through, because what they were going through was going to set up vindication on behalf of the entire family of Israel:

*My father spoke extensively about the Gentiles and about the house of Israel...*

It’s about the house of Israel.

*...comparing them [Israel] to an olive tree whose branches would be broken off and scattered throughout the earth. Therefore he said it was part of God’s plan for us to go to our promised land, to fulfill the Lord’s word that we would be scattered across the earth; and after the house of Israel has been scattered, they would be gathered back together; or in other words, in the end, after the Gentiles receive the fullness of the gospel, that the olive tree’s natural branches (meaning the remnants of the house of Israel), would be grafted in or learn to worship the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer. (1 Nephi 3:4 CE)<sup>2</sup>*

[coughing] Excuse me. So now we’ve got Lehi talking about how Israel is going to fulfill this destiny, but in order to do so, they have to be broken up and scattered, just like their family was being done at that moment. But everything he’s going to say is about Israel, of which his family knew that they were part. But if you’re going to accomplish what the Lord intended to do with the olive tree, necessarily it’s going to involve the Gentiles. The scattering is intended to accomplish a purpose, and the purpose includes Gentiles. Well, Lehi is speaking long before we ever get to the Allegory of the Olive Tree that Jacob includes in his book. But from what I just read you about what Father Lehi was saying, I think it’s fairly obvious what he drew from.

There’s a lot we don’t know about Zenos, who wrote the Allegory of the Olive Tree. We don’t know when he lived, what his tribe was, or the time when the Allegory of the Olive Tree was first presented. At one point, I took the Book of Mormon and I did a search for everything that was quoted in the Book of Mormon that directly attributed the material to Zenos.

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There's probably a lot more that is in the Book of Mormon that was drawn from Zenos—either paraphrasing or quoting him—but because they didn't give attribution, I don't *know* if we're looking at Zenos or not. But from the things that have been identified, there were over 3000 words directly quoted from Zenos in the Book of Mormon.

His prophecies undoubtedly influenced what Isaiah would later prophesy. But Isaiah put much of the same kinds of prophetic foretelling in obscure language and in imagery, and Zenos just did it bluntly. He didn't play around with language that you have to interpret to figure out that *unto us a child is born, unto us a [king] is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder[s]* (Isaiah 4:1), that could be Herod, that could be Hezekiah, that could be Saul. Zenos comes right out and says he's talking about the Messiah, and he's talking about what will happen to Him and how He will be treated. And he was direct.

Now, Isaiah—who came after Zenos—Isaiah has some prophetic language that the Book of Mormon picks up and preserves. (And everything I'm reading tonight comes from the Covenant of Christ version of the Scriptures because I believe them to be far more accurate and clearly understandable than the other version called the Book of Mormon.)

*Their minds have become dull, their ears plugged, and their eyes closed, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and...healed. Then I asked: Lord, how long will they remain like this? ...He said: Until their cities have been destroyed and left desolate, and their houses abandoned, and the land deserted, until the Lord has driven everyone far away, and there are many abandoned places throughout the land. But a tithe of the people will remain and will be burned. Like a linden tree or oak tree, leaving a stump with living roots although cut down, likewise a holy remnant to be restored still survives in the residue. (2 Nephi 9:2 CE)*

So here the Lord is talking to Isaiah in response to a question that suggests that Israel is going to be decimated—but there's still going to be a root remaining that can spring back to life because the roots will be preserved and be capable of regenerating. So Nephi (talking to his brothers, trying to explain to them the things that they didn't understand), Nephi gives this explanation to his brothers:

*Now, I tell you that the Spirit of the Lord within our father compared the house of Israel to an olive tree. Are we not broken off from the house of Israel? Are we not a branch of the house of Israel? The thing our father means about the natural branches being grafted in through the fullness of the Gentiles is that in the last days, when our descendants have fallen away in unbelief for many years over generations, and after the [true] Messiah will have appeared in person to mankind, then the fullness of the gospel of the Messiah will come to the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles it will go to our descendants. At that time, they'll learn that they're from the house of Israel and are the Lord's covenant people. Then our descendants will learn about their forefathers and learn about the gospel of their Redeemer, which He taught to their ancestors. So they'll come to know about their Redeemer and the correct details of his doctrine, so they can know*

*how to come to Him and be saved. At that time, won't they be glad and give praise to their everlasting God, their rock and their salvation? Won't they receive strength and nourishment from the true vine at that day? Won't they come to God's true fold? Yes. They'll be included with the house of Israel again; they'll be grafted [in] into the true olive tree, being a natural branch of it. (1 Nephi 4:3 CE)*

Okay? So they've got to get the gospel, they've got to come to know the Redeemer, but even then, they have to be grafted back in, in order to become connected to the living vine; otherwise, they're still just out there a dead branch.

Then we have this (and this is another statement from Isaiah that I want you to keep in mind because we'll get back to how directly this ties to the Allegory of the Olive Tree later on):

*A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a Branch will produce fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him — the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of respect for the Lord — and He'll have insight and love for the Lord. He won't judge by what He sees with His eyes, nor decide by what He hears with His ears, but with righteousness He'll judge the needy, and with justice decide matters for the poor. (2 Nephi 9:21 CE)*

...clearly a messianic prophecy about who and what the Lord was, but it is the Lord that is going to spring up out of a dead stump whose roots were still alive.

So with that—and we'll tie some other things back in—with that, it leads us to the actual Allegory of the Olive Tree that Zenos prophesied and that Jacob included in his part of the Book of Mormon.

*My people, let me remind you...the words [of] the Prophet Zenos spoke about the house of Israel, saying...*

So, once again, it's about **the house of Israel**. It isn't about Gentiles or about a gentile stump somewhere that turns into a independent house/family/living tree that God intends to preserve. **It's about Israel**. If a Gentile does not get grafted back into the house of Israel, they're going to be gathered up in a bundle and thrown into the fire and burned—because that's the destiny that's talked about in the allegory when the master is cleaning up the vineyard at the end. So this is only about the house of Israel.

*Hearken, O house of Israel, and hear my words, the words of a prophet of the Lord. This is the Lord's message: I'll compare **you, O house of Israel**, to a tame olive tree a man took and nourished in his vineyard. And it grew, became old, and began to decay. And the lord of the vineyard went out and saw his olive tree started to decay, so he said: I'll prune it and loosen the soil around it and tend it, so perhaps some young, tender branches will sprout and it won't die. So he pruned it, loosened the soil around it, and tended it according to his word. After*

*many days it began to sprout a few young and tender branches, but the main top was dying.*

So Israel is gonna wind up in this predicament. It's going to be corrupt and decaying and needing to be pruned, and the Lord says He WILL prune it. Well, if you look at the history of Israel, what happened to the northern tribes that made them lost? They got pruned, rather dramatically, by Assyria and relocated as a hostage nation into another place. The problem was the main top was dying. So he's looking for a few young and tender branches, which is not the main top. The main top, generally (when you've got an organization or a people or a structure), almost always becomes corrupted, because the target of the adversary in a structure is to grab hold of the top of the organization in order to change the organization into a tool that the adversary can use for the corruption of people. You probably can't find a finer, more concerned, caring, decent human being than Walt Disney when he was alive; but he left behind an organization, and the organization that he left behind has now become a tool for corrupt and evil and conspiring men, just like everything else that we find in this world and just like, politically, what we find just about everywhere. If there is a place where wealth/power/influence are concentrated, you'll find mischief there. It's just the way it goes. The main top is dying.

*...the Lord of the vineyard saw it and said to his servant: It makes me sad to lose this tree. So go and retrieve branches from a wild olive tree and bring them here to me.*

So now you have a contrast between something he calls *tame* and something he calls *wild*. There's a number of words that he uses in order to describe what is tame in this allegory. *Tame* is also called "natural," "mother," or "original." Okay? So now we have a wild olive tree, and he's saying, "Bring those in, these branches,"

*Then we'll cut off the main branches that are starting to wither away, and throw them into the fire to be burned. And the lord of the vineyard said: I'll remove many of these new, tender branches and graft them in places I choose; then it won't matter if the original tree root dies, because I can still save its fruit for myself. Therefore I'll take these young, tender branches and graft them in places I choose. Now take the branches [from] the wild olive tree and graft them in to replace them. Then I'll throw the ones I've cut...into the fire and burn them, so [that] they won't take up space in my vineyard.*

So you have the main top that's become corrupted. He wants that cut off, and he wants that burned: just get rid of it; destroy that. Then there are tender branches that are growing: those he wants to transplant and put them in places that he's going to choose. And in place of those young, tender branches, he wants to bring in wild branches/wild shoots and to graft in wild shoots to replace the tender branches that he's moving elsewhere; they are wild though. But the "main thing"? It's just gonna be burned up and discarded.

*...the servant of the lord of the vineyard followed the lord of the vineyard's plan and grafted in the branches of the wild olive tree. And the lord of the vineyard had it tilled, pruned, and tended, saying to his servant: It makes me sad to lose*

*this tree; so I've done this to perhaps keep its roots alive, so they don't die, because I would like to save them for myself. Therefore follow the plan; watch the tree and tend it following my instructions. And I'll place these branches in the lowest [part] of my vineyard...*

Okay, the word “nithermost” that we find in the Book of Mormon means “lowest part.” So when we get to this “nithermost part of the vineyard” and he’s saying, “I’m gonna transplant it into the lowest part of my vineyard,” ask yourself why they would be considered to be lowest? What does the word lowest mean in this context?

*...where I choose and that isn't your concern. I'll do this in order to save the tree's natural branches for myself and to store its fruit for myself in preparation for the harvest time. Because it would make me sad to lose this tree and its fruit.*

So now you have two things there: this tree and its fruit; and both of those have specific meaning. He wants to preserve good fruit—he calls that “best fruit”; he calls it “precious fruit.” And he wants to get rid of bad fruit, which he also calls “bitter fruit” or “evil.”

*And the lord of the vineyard went his way and hid the natural branches of the tame olive tree in the lowest parts of the vineyard, some in one part and some in another, according to his deliberate plan.*

Now, what’s interesting about this is that it is the lord doing this. The people working in the vineyard, this is out of their sight. They don’t even know where they’ve been taken. A little later, they’ll be shown where they’ve been taken, and they’ll be surprised at some of the places that the lord wound up transplanting these tender branches into. But right now, it is the lord—and the lord alone—of the vineyard who decides where he’s gonna put these various parts of the natural tree.

*After a long time had elapsed, the lord of the vineyard said to his servant: Come, let's return to the vineyard to work there.*

*Then the lord of the vineyard with his servant returned to work in the vineyard. The servant said to his master: Oh good! Look here! Inspect this tree. And the lord of the vineyard looked and saw the tree where the wild olive branches had been grafted in.*

So we’re now talking about, essentially, the sheep that descends with all kinds of unclean animals on it that Peter’s commanded to take and eat. And Peter says, “I’ve never violated that part of the law of Moses.” And the Lord says, “What I’ve declared to be clean, don’t you treat as unclean,” which Peter understood as meaning the Gentiles are welcomed into being converted and becoming part of the Christian movement. The Apostle Paul was absolutely unequivocal about that, and yet we see in the book of Acts how both Peter and Paul wound up being a little squeamish, at moments, in the right place at the right time, about their association with gentile converts. But the lord of the vineyard is saying:

*It[']s sprouted and begun to produce fruit. He saw it was good and its fruit was like the natural fruit.*

Some of those people who got converted back in the meridian of time after the death and resurrection of the Lord, during the ministry of the apostles, were good fruit.

*He said to his servant: See, the wild tree's branches have taken hold of the root's vitality, so that the root has provided them with vigor. And because of the root's vitality, the wild branches have produced tame fruit.*

So whatever it was about Israel that was fundamental (and the root of it) had the effect of redeeming Gentiles that were wild.

*...Therefore I'll store plenty of fruit that this tree has now produced. I'll store the fruit for myself as part of the harvest.*

*The lord of the vineyard then told his servant: Come, let's go to the lowest part of the vineyard and see if the tree's natural branches have also produced a lot of fruit, so I can store the fruit for myself as part of the harvest. And they went out to where the lord of the vineyard had hidden the tree's natural branches, and he said to [his servant]: Look at these! He saw the first tree had produced plenty of fruit, and he saw it [was also] good.*

Who were they? Where were they taken? They're just referred to as the "first group," but they produced plenty of fruit. Somewhere. Some people.

*Then, he told the servant: I've tended it a long time...it's produced plenty of fruit. So take the fruit of the tree and store it as part of the harvest, so I can save it for myself.*

*The servant asked [the] master: How was it that you came to plant this tree or this tree branch here? It was the poorest spot in the whole vineyard.*

Okay, why? What was it about this spot that makes it poor? Understand, we're talking about people. We're talking about transplanting a scattered remnant of the house of Israel into some place that was poor, that was low quality, that was undesirable. In the evaluation of the angel or the servant who's working there, it's the poorest place in the whole vineyard!

*But the lord of the vineyard replied: Don't complain about it, I knew it was a poor spot of ground. That's why I told you I gave it attention and cared for it a long time, and you see that it's produced plenty of fruit.*

So remarkable results are achieved when the Lord is the one that's doing the husbanding of the planting. We tend to view poor places in the vineyard all over, as we cast our eyes about in the world. And yet, sometimes that's exactly where you're gonna get plenty of fruit.

*Then the lord of the vineyard said to his servant: Look here! I've also planted another branch of the tree, and you know this spot of ground was poorer than the first.*

So you think that first one was bad? Let me show you where I put the next group from Israel, and then you realize that place was, actually, it was okay. We're now going to Magna.

*But look at the tree! I've tended it a long time and it['s] produced plenty of fruit. Therefore gather it and store it as part of the harvest, so I can save it for myself.*

So now this has produced good fruit—in the most unlikely/the poorest/the worst place conceivable.

*Then the lord of the vineyard said again to his servant: Look here and see another branch I've planted. I've tended it too, and it has produced fruit. And he told the servant: Look here and see the last one! I've planted this one in a very favorable spot and tended it a long time. And only part of the tree has produced tame fruit, but the other part of the tree has produced wild fruit. I've tended this tree like the others.*

Okay, so we don't know that this is exactly what it is talking about, but it would seem that this transplant would have produced *good fruit* from the Nephites and *bad fruit* from the Lamanites because we know that part of the history of this branch of the olive tree that got transplanted, and we also know that this part of the vineyard—this land—is called “choice above all other lands.” And so if this IS the good spot, then we have a record—in the Covenant of Christ and the Book of Mormon—we have a record of one part of that house of Israel and the planting of the natural branch in a wild tree root.

*Later, the lord of the vineyard told his servant: Cut off the branches that haven't produced good fruit...throw them in the fire. But the servant said to him: Let's prune it, loosen the soil around it, and tend it a little longer, so it will perhaps produce good fruit for you, so you can store it as part of the harvest.*

So if you look at the events that happen in Third Nephi and the pruning that went on there, you can see that in the actual retelling of the history of these people, that a pruning did take place, and parts of it... And “the soil was loosened around it, and they tended it a little longer,” just as this allegory describes.

*So the lord of the vineyard and his servant cared for all the vineyard's fruit.*

*After a long time had passed, the lord of the vineyard told his servant: Come, let's return to the vineyard to work there again. Because the time approaches and the end is coming soon, therefore I must store fruit before the final harvest arrives. Then the lord of the vineyard and the servant returned to the vineyard and came to the tree whose natural branches had been taken off and which had wild branches grafted in, and **all kinds of fruit** weighed down the tree.*

You have Catholicism. You have Orthodoxy. You have Lutheranism. You have Presbyterianism. You have Church of England. You have the Anabaptists, followed by the Baptists. You have Pentecostals and Evangelicals. You have **all kinds of fruit**.

*And the lord of the vineyard tasted the fruit, **every kind** that had grown there. And the lord of the vineyard said: We've tended this tree a long time, and I've stored plenty of fruit for myself in preparation for the harvest. Now it has produced plenty of fruit, although **none of it's good**; there are **all kinds of bad fruit**, and it's of no use to me, despite all our work.*

"The Lord said unto me they were **all** wrong, that their creeds were an abomination, and that the professors were **all** corrupt, so don't join any of them, Joseph."

*Now it makes me sad to lose this tree. And the lord of the vineyard said to the servant: What else can we do for the tree so that I can again obtain good fruit for myself? And the servant said to his master: Because you grafted in the wild olive tree's branches, they've saved the roots, so they're still alive and haven't died; and you can see they're still good.*

There were people who and are only kept from the truth because they know not where to find it. There's still some goodness there; there's still people who ought properly to inherit the blessings of Israel if they could find it.

*Then the lord of the vineyard told his servant: The tree is of no use to me and its roots are of no use to me so long as it produces bad fruit. However, I know the roots are good, and I've kept them alive as part of my plans. And because of their great vitality, they've produced good fruit from the wild branches until now. But the wild branches have grown and overrun the roots. And because the wild branches have overcome the roots, the tree has produced a lot of bad fruit. And because it has produced so much bad fruit, you see it's beginning to die. It will soon be lost, reaching the point that we'll need to throw it into the fire unless we do something to keep it from dying.*

*Then the lord of the vineyard told his servant: Let's go down into the lowest parts of the vineyard and see if the natural branches have also produced bad fruit. So they went down into the lowest parts of the vineyard and saw the fruit of the natural branches had also become corrupt — the first, second, and last — they had all become corrupt. And the wild fruit of the last one had overcome that part of the tree that [had] produced the good fruit, to the point that the good branch had withered away and died.*

...which is a description of what happened to the Nephites when the Lamanites ultimately overcame them in their destruction at the end of the record of the Nephites. So it appears that that third one that had been planted in the most favorable place is, in all probability, the record that we have of Lehi's family.

*Then the lord of the vineyard mourned and asked [his] servant: What more could I have done for my vineyard? I knew that all the vineyard's fruit, except for these, had become corrupt. Now these that once produced good fruit have also become corrupt. All my vineyard's trees are now good for nothing and will need to be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

The apostasy was universal. There was no place on Earth where you could find salvation—every institution, every creed, all corrupt.

*I planted this last one, whose branch[es] ha[d] withered away, in a good spot of ground — indeed, a place I valued above all other parts of my vineyard.*

*And you see I also cut down what was growing in this spot of ground so I could plant this tree in its place.*

That appears, again, to be referring to the record we have from the Nephites because, before them, the Jaredites got cut down in order for transplanting the branches onto something out there—wild root though it may be—where it could grow.

*You can see that part of it produced good fruit and the other part produced wild fruit. Because I didn't cut off the bad branches and throw them into the fire, they've overcome the good branch, so it has withered away. Now, despite all the care we've given to my vineyard, all its trees have become corrupt, so they don't produce any good fruit. I was hoping to save these, to have stored up fruit [to] myself as part of the harvest. But [because] they've become like the wild olive tree, and they're of no value except to be cut down and thrown into the fire. And it makes me sad to lose them.*

*But what more could I have done in my vineyard? Have I neglected my work and failed to tend it? No, I've tended it...I've loosened the soil around it, I've pruned it, I've fertilized it, and I've worked my hand almost the whole day, [so] the end is approaching. It makes me sad that I must cut down all my vineyard's trees and throw them into the fire to be burned. What's ruined my vineyard?*

*Then the servant asked his master: Isn't...your vineyard's ambitious overgrowth? Haven't the branches overgrown the good roots? And because the branches have overgrown their roots — growing faster than the strength of the roots, taking strength to themselves — I ask, Isn't this the reason your vineyard's trees have become corrupted?*

You know, Christianity spread over the Roman Empire in large measure because of the steps that Constantine took. Even the form of the Catholic Church began to imitate the Holy Roman Empire (as it calls itself—the Catholic Church) because the Pontiff of Rome and the Pontiff of Catholicism go by the same title; and the Roman Senate is mirrored in the Congress of the Cardinals—the Holy Conclave of the Cardinals that choose the successor pontiff to replace the prior pontiff; and just like the Roman Emperor was regarded as God's representative on Earth and to wield the power (essentially) of God Himself, the Roman Catholic Pope is regarded as the Vicar of Christ and infallible because he wields the authority of God. (It's not because he can't make a mistake; it's because whatever mistake he makes, God owns—because God's empowered him to that end.)

*Then the servant asked his master: Isn't it your vineyard's ambitious overgrowth? Haven't the branches overgrown the good roots? [It's one of the reasons why haste is always perilous.] And because the branches have*

*overgrown the roots — growing faster than the strength of the roots, taking strength to themselves — I ask, Isn't this the reason your vineyard's trees have become corrupted?*

*The lord of the vineyard told his servant: Let's go ahead and cut down the vineyard's trees and throw them in the fire, so they [w]on't take up space in my vineyard — I've done everything I could. What more could I have done? But the servant said to the lord of the vineyard: Wait a little longer. And the lord of the vineyard replied: Yes, I want to give it more time, because it makes me sad to lose my [vineyard]. Therefore let's take some of the original branches I've transplanted to the lowest parts of my vineyard and graft them into the tree they came from.*

This is talking about returning Israel back to the status of **being Israel**, people who inherited a covenant through the Fathers unto themselves; he's saying, Let's take this and bring it right back into where it started when the original was here.

*And let's cut from the tree the branches with the most bitter fruit and graft in the tree's original branches in their place. I'll do this so the tree won't die, so that perhaps I [can] save the roots for myself and for my own purpose. And the roots of the tree from which I took the original branches are still alive; therefore, to also save them as part of my plan, I'll take some of the tree's original branches and graft them back. I'll graft the original branches back to the roots of the original tree, so I can...save the roots for myself, so that when they're strong enough, they might produce good fruit for me, and I can still celebrate my vineyard's fruit.*

This is about weaving back together not multiple houses of multiple people in multiple venues. It's talking about restoring a **singular tree**, which is Israel; a **singular family**, which is Israel—**only Israel is going to be saved**. That's it. Outside of Israel, there is no salvation. And the purpose of the lord of the vineyard going through everything that he's going through is in order to reassemble again what was here originally.

*...the lord of the vineyard said to the servant: Only cut away the most bitter, wild branches from the trees. And graft in their place according to my instructions. We'll tend the vineyard's trees again and trim their branches and cut from the trees the ripe branches, which have to be destroyed, and throw them into the fire. I'm doing this to let the roots perhaps regain strength because they're still promising and because changing the branches will let the good overcome the evil. Now I've saved the **natural** branches and their roots and grafted the **natural** branches into their mother tree again and kept the mother tree's roots from dying.*

This is about that singular, original mother tree that the Lord is trying to re-establish as the house of Israel, not multiple trees and multiple places from multiple people in divergent points of origin. It's trying to reclaim Israel.

*That way my vineyard's trees can perhaps produce good fruit again, and so I can celebrate with my vineyard's fruit. Maybe I'll be able to have great results because I've kept the **roots** and **branches** of the original plant alive.*

That's the purpose. Get the original back together again.

*Now go ahead and call servants, so we can work diligently with our strength in the vineyard, so we can prepare the vineyard to again yield the **best good fruit** as I originally had in my vineyard.*

...most precious fruit.

*Therefore let's go work hard this **last time** — the end is approaching, and this is the last time I'll prune my vineyard. Graft in the branches — begin with the last so [that] they can be first...so the first can be last —*

So that third place, that good piece of ground, that most favorable spot where we think the origin of the people is summarized in Covenant of Christ or the Book of Mormon, he's now saying that's the place we're going to, to start it all over again—and it began with Joseph Smith.

*...loosen the soil around the trees, both old and young — the first and the last, and the last and the first — so everything can be tended again for the last time.*

Very often the words "last time" gets used—in particular, in the Doctrine and Covenants or the Teachings and Commandments—to mean the "most recent": *...this is the testimony, last of all, which we [bear] of him: that...we saw him, even on the right hand of God (T&C 69:5).* Last of all doesn't mean no one else ever after that will have a testimony of Christ. It means, "This is our testimony, most recent of all, latest of all, most current of all." HERE, "last time" is being used about finality because, as the story goes on, they're going to tear down the entire vineyard, burn everything, and keep the fruit, and we'll have another cycle of creation after that.

*...the end is approaching. And if it turns out [that] these last grafts grow and produce natural fruit, then you will trim away so they can grow.*

So once you begin that process using Joseph Smith, it's not going to be a raging success. It's got to be tended. It's got to be pruned. It's got to be worked with.

*[And] as they begin to grow, you must clear away the branches that produce bitter fruit, as the good gains size and strength. But you must not clear away [all] the bad...at once as that would let the roots be too strong for the graft, because we don't want the graft to die, and I don't want to lose my [vineyard] trees.*

So the restoration through Joseph Smith begins, and when it begins, it's not an unmitigated success. It requires a lot of attention, care, pruning, digging, and a lot of effort and trimming

*...away the bad in proportion to the growth of the good. ...This will be how I'll rid my vineyard of the bad. I'll graft the branches of the original tree back into the original tree...I'll graft the branches of the original tree into the tree's original branches. This is how I'll bring them back **together**, so they will produce...original fruit...and be **united**.*

Israel needs to become one again.

*The bad will be thrown out — including from my entire vineyard. I'll prune my vineyard just this last time.*

This is what's happening now, okay? The lord of the vineyard is working. Servants have been called; notice it wasn't just Joseph. There had to be other servants that get involved in the process because it's not gonna be a singular, successful work.

*The lord of the vineyard sent his servant, and the servant went...did as the Lord had commanded him and brought a few other servants. And the lord of the vineyard told them: Get started and work hard in the vineyard. This is the last time I'll tend my vineyard — the end is near and the harvest is coming quickly.*

There's going to be a harvest.

*If you work hard with me, you'll have joy in the fruit that I'll harvest for myself at the end of the growing season.*

*Then ~~the servant~~ the servants [plural] went ahead and worked hard, and the lord of the vineyard...worked with them. And they obeyed the lord of the vineyard's direction[s]... And [the] original fruit again grew in the vineyard, and the original branches began to grow and produce abundantly, and the wild branches began to be cut off and thrown away.*

That's underway. That's what's happening.

*And they kept the root and the top equal based on their strength. This is how they worked with all diligence according to the lord of the vineyard's commandments, until the bad had been thrown out of the vineyard and the lord had saved the good for himself, so the [tree] had again produced the original fruit.*

That's what we're hoping to see achieved. That's what work still remains to be accomplished, but that's what the Lord of the vineyard has always been aiming for: to return that family back into a covenant status with Him.

*And they bec[o]me like one body and the fruit was equally good; and the lord of the vineyard had saved the original fruit for himself, which was most valuable to him from the beginning. (Jacob 3:7-28 CE, emphasis added)*

See, the family of God that was originally established in the beginning was the purpose of the whole plan and why Abraham and Isaac and Jacob got grafted back into that original

trunk, which mirrors a grafting that has to happen throughout the entire vineyard after Israel—which was the new name given to Jacob that we read—after Israel is scattered. So the family of God needs to be linked back together to reconnect back to Adam so that that which was most valuable to him from the beginning returns. *This same priesthood which was in the beginning shall be in the end of the world also* (Genesis 3:14). Adam foretold that was going to happen.

So now, when we get to this next paragraph, these are millennial events, and they are gonna happen in the future. I am far more concerned with where we are now, and so I'll leave you that last paragraph to read for yourself.

So now we know a little something about some of what the Lord has been up to. But there's other things that bear upon what the Lord has been up to, and He gives us some hints. When He appeared to the Nephites and He was talking to them, Christ said to the audience that survived the pruning at that day:

*This is your inherited land; the Father has given it to you. And the Father has never commanded Me to tell that to your fellow Israelites at Jerusalem. Nor has the Father ever commanded Me to tell them about the **other tribes** of the house of Israel the Father [has] led away from the land. But the Father did command Me to [say to them]: I have other sheep that aren't part of this fold. I will visit them and they will also hear My voice, and I will make all My sheep into one fold, following one Shepherd.*

It was the purpose at the beginning to have one family, to have everyone in that family connected to God, and to return at the end what happens at the beginning. And He's pursuing that objective, and He's telling the people that assembled at Bountiful about this.

*Now, because of [the] stubbornness and unbelief they didn't understand what I said. Therefore the Father commanded Me not to say anything else about this subject to them. But truly I tell you the Father has commanded Me, and I'm telling it to you, that you were separated away from them because of their iniquity. Therefore it's because of their iniquity that they don't know about you. Moreover, ...I'm telling you this truth: the Father has separated **other tribes** away from them. And it's because of their iniquity that they don't know about them. Now I tell you truthfully that you are the ones I spoke of when I said: I have other sheep that aren't part of this fold; I will visit them, and they will also hear My voice; then I will make [them] My sheep into one fold, following one Shepherd.*

Then after another statement or two, He says:

*And again I testify to you [that] I have other sheep that don't live in this land, nor in the land of Jerusalem, nor in any of the areas where I went to minister. The ones I'm speaking about are those who haven't heard My voice yet; and I haven't revealed Myself to them either. But I've received a commandment from the Father to go to them: [and] they're to hear My voice and [to] be included*

*among My sheep, so there can be one fold, following one Shepherd. Therefore I will go in order to reveal Myself to them. (3 Nephi 7:3 CE, emphasis added)*

So Christ is saying, “I came to you, I told them that there were other sheep, and when I said that I was talking about you. But there’s other tribes of Israel that have been led away.” Now, the way He states that is in the plural: there are **other tribes**. Now in the allegory, we have a “poor place,” a “poorer place,” and a “good place,” which would imply that when it comes to... Since other sheep that haven’t been ministered to yet are not the Nephites and Lamanites, and they were the ones that were going to be last, and so Christ goes to them last, He’s saying there are others that are going to be among the separated tribes of Israel (plural). Given the description of the vineyard and given the plurality of the statement about other tribes, it appears there are at least two. I mean, there were ten tribes, but there may have been ten tribes moved into two locations, other than the “best place” in the vineyard. So Christ doesn’t clarify that—just plural.

Then we have Nephi giving his valedictory lecture at the end of his second book:

*So, because you have a Bible, there’s no need to conclude it contains all My words or that I haven’t caused more to be written. I command all people — in the east, the west, the north, [and] the south, and on the islands of the sea — to write the words I speak to them, because I’ll judge the world from the books that will be written, each person according to what they do measured against what’s written. I’ll speak to the Jews, and they’ll write it; I’ll speak to the Nephites, and they’ll write it; I’ll also speak to the other tribes of the house of Israel...*

Again, “other tribes”; it’s just a plural. I mean, how many of them are there? Had to be at least two plantings. But He’s going to speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel...

*...I’ve led away, and they’ll write it; I’ll...speak to every nation on earth, ...they’ll write it. The Jews will have the Nephites’ records, and the Nephites will have the Jews’ records; and the Nephites and [the] Jews will have the records of the lost tribes of Israel, and the lost tribes of Israel will have the records of the Nephites and the Jews.*

So eventually there’s going to be a gathering together of the various records—three specific groups, but “lost tribes” is plural. We can’t know the upper limit, but we do know for sure there’s at least three. So as he concludes or moves along in his valedictory address, Nephi adds this comment:

*...All the Gentiles who repent are the Lord’s covenant people, and all the Jews who refuse to repent will be rejected. The Lord only covenants with those who repent and believe in His Son, who is the Holy One of Israel. (2 Nephi 12:10-11 CE)*

In this context, the Holy One of Israel is Christ in the role of the One to whom we need to reconnect.

So taking all of this into account, think about what Christ is saying and how He wants to put everything into one conceptual framework when Christ, as reported in the Gospel of John in the New Testament, taught this:

*I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that bears not fruit, he takes away. And every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can you except you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He that abides in me and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit, for without me you can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you desire and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified: that you bear much fruit — so shall you be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Continue in my love. If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full. (John 9:10)*

He clearly had Isaiah's prophecies in mind, because His first sermon that He delivers in the New Testament is a quote from Isaiah, and He says, "This day has this prophecy been fulfilled in your ears," identifying Himself as the Messiah. But even Isaiah drew on the "root that would spring forth a shoot that would provide life." And Christ is saying, "I'm that. If you expect to have life, you have to connect to me. I'm that vine," OR "I'm the natural root of the original Mother Tree to which it is necessary to connect if you hope to have salvation."

Now, just as Covenant of Christ is superior to the Book of Mormon, I think also the Testimony of St. John is a better version than the Gospel of John, and those same words or that same conversation or message that the Lord delivered recorded in the Gospel of John is also covered in the Testimony of St. John, but the wording is a little different. So I want to read that:

*I am the true vine or head of the Father's family, and my Father is the husbandman over that family. Every branch connected to me that does not produce fruit, he will remove, and every branch that produces fruit he will prune back so that it produces better fruit. You will bear fruit if you follow the things I have taught you. Stay connected to me as part of the Heavenly family, and I will nourish you. Just as a branch cannot produce fruit if it is not connected to the vine, neither will you be able to bear fruit unless you remain connected with me. I am the vine, and you are the branches. He that stays connected to me, and I to him, will be abundantly fruitful; but without the connection to me you will perish. If a man loses his connection with me, he is merely a withered branch; and men take the withered branches, cut them away and burn them. If you stay connected to me, and my words live in you, you will ask according to my will, and you will be given the ability to accomplish my will. It will please and vindicate my Father if you produce abundant fruit, and that*

*will prove you follow me. Just like the Father has loved me, I have in turn likewise loved you. Therefore, remain connected with me and my love will be with you. If you practice my teachings you will always remain connected with me; just as I have kept my Father's teachings and have remained connected with him. (TSJ 10:17)*

So having reviewed all that, then, I want to read two excerpts, one from the prayer asking the Lord to re-establish a covenant with us. The words of that prayer, when it started to get composed, actually got dictated. So the prayer is actually what the Lord wanted to be said in a prayer to Him to get us re-accepted. And I'm reading an excerpt from that:

*We ask to be reconnected as a people to you by covenant, to make us yours, connected to a living vine, restored as a people, and numbered with Israel. (T&C 156:15)*

Those words take on a profoundly deeper meaning when you realize how much of connecting back to the vine that is the family of God, that *same Priesthood which was in the beginning shall...in the end of the world [be] also* (Genesis 3:14).

And in the answer to that prayer, the content of which the Lord directed, He said this, responding to the request:

*All you who have turned [away] from your wicked ways and repented of your evil doings, of lying and deceiving, and of all whoredoms, and of secret abominations, idolatries, murders, priestcrafts, envyings, and strife, and from all wickedness and abominations, and have come unto me, and been baptized in my name, and have received a remission of your sins, and received the holy ghost, **are now numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.** (T&C 158:10, emphasis added)*

That was the purpose behind the work that the Lord undertook that culminated in 2017 with re-establishing the ability for people on Earth to be identified with Israel. The list of things—I didn't realize it at the time—but the list of things that are in this part of the Covenant are nearly verbatim/exactly what Mormon advised the Gentiles who read his record to do. He tells us to do these things. I want you to... I want to re-read that list of things that we're supposed to have repented of because I believe when the Lord is giving a list of stuff and a description, He's not just randomly throwing stuff at the wall. I believe this is a list of exactly what happens to religious institutions when they get separated from the true vine or get separated from Christ. This is what institutions do; this is what churches do; this is what organizations do. Because when you have that, then ambitious, aspiring men want to occupy the seat of authority, not so that they can do God's will, but so that they can exercise authority over others—because they crave that in order to fill something missing inside of themselves. They want that as a substitute for actual connection to God. This is how the institutions of religion become corrupted:

*All you who have turned from your wicked ways and repented of your evil doings, of lying and deceiving...*

You shouldn't have to think very hard at all about the history of any church that you're familiar with in which lying and deceiving isn't part of their religion. The LDS Church, for example, in their "Answers to Essay Questions," says that Joseph Smith, in the version that they preach of that man, their version of that man has him be a liar and a deceiver. I don't believe that version to be true. I believe that the noble and the virtuous and the wise will only constantly seek blessings under the hands of Joseph because Joseph was virtuous, noble, and wise. He was a good man, and he was fighting against lying and deceivings, evil doings that began very early on in the Restoration.

*...lyings and deceivings, and of all whoredoms...*

You don't have to think very long at all before you should be able to see religious institutions in which whoredoms become a regular part of the iniquitous practices. I can't remember the name of the minister, but it made the national headlines. He was an Evangelical. He had a radio ministry. He had a TV show. He was big, whammy Evangelical, and it made *Time* magazine. (This was years ago when *Time* magazine was actually in print and relevant and at the law school on the magazine rack.) He founded a college, and he was caught committing adultery with coeds at the college that he founded. And there was a lot of contemporaneous news about the genes and chromosomes that we have compelling us throughout life to accomplish certain things and to survive. And his excuse (literally, it was in the article I read—may have been *Newsweek*), he said, "I know it was wrong, but my genes and chromosomes compelled me to do it." And my response when I read the article (and I muttered it out loud at the magazine rack): "Well, if you kept your 'genes' on, you wouldn't have spread your chromosomes in the wrong place." And that got a lot of people reading the article after me.

So "whoredoms," and then right on the heels of that, once you start lying, once you start deceiving, and you fall into whoredoms, then there's:

*...secret abominations, idolatries, [and] murders...*

See, sometimes in order to cover up the fact of your abominations, you have to think about and conspire together in order to murder. And in order to get away with that, "idolatries" necessarily include oaths and covenants of secrecy so that we can put our band together, protect ourselves by killing those that are witnesses to what we've done, and we bind ourselves together in a way that protects one another so that we're never found out.

*...priestcrafts...*

...because dude, if we're going to all this trouble, we may as well make a living! I mean, dude, we can't be up to all this stuff and not collect a paycheck for it! Think of how hard it has been on us to have done this stuff!

*...envying, and strife.*

Oh, crap. Now that we have a hierarchy, I want to be the big cheese! I envy the guy in the big chair, and we've got to figure out a way to ingratiate ourselves so that we can start moving up. Envy and strifes are a necessary part of hierarchical religions. This is not a list given

to us to have us disregard it as we attempt to practice the original religion of the people of Israel. He's not giving us this list in order to make us say, "Oh, I'm good. I'm glad I'm not that!" He's telling us exactly how you fall into the pit in which there is nothing but bad fruit left in the entire vineyard and it all deserves to be gathered in bundles and burned. He's telling us how to avoid that. The envyings and strifes are there because now you've got such an institution that has gathered such momentum, that has acquired so much wealth/so much power/so much influence, access to so many whoredoms and so many idolatries, and has committed murders, and now your priestcraft has been secured and your wealth and your toe-hold in this world is secure. You now envy and have strife with one another.

*...and from all wickedness and abominations, and have come unto me, and been baptized in my name, and have received a remission of your sins, and received the holy ghost, are now numbered with my people who are of the house of Israel.*

...because the house of Israel is supposed to be familial. We're supposed to treat one another the way we would treat each other if we're part of one family, bound together in a brotherhood and a sisterhood, in a relationship that makes us think of the best interests of one another. That's what Israel is supposed to look like. It is not supposed to look like a comical assortment of idolaters being instructed that, "When I stand, you stand; and when I sit, you sit; and I want you to sing loud enough so that I can hear the **joy in your damn voice when I hear you sing!**" And the protocol is that the senior most one of us gets to speak last, and the junior most speaks first—but the junior most had better be very circumspect about what they say. And when we enter a room, the senior most enters first, and the junior most comes last.

Hierarchies are intent upon the very sorts of things that destroy Israel, destroy that which was in the beginning, make it literally impossible for there to be a living tree with roots that come and spring from Christ Himself who nourishes the entirety of the body so that they are one, and there's no lofty branches, and there's no bad fruit, and there's no envying and strifes, and they're none of the things that typify the religions that get organized into something other than a body of believers.

So that's the Allegory of the Olive Tree, and it saves me a lot of writing to have simply given the talk. Does anyone have any comments, questions, statements about this? Because I'd like to stay on topic.

Oh. Yeah?

**Question 1:** So it indicates that there's MANY natural branches that are taken off, and it lists the first and the second; and then later they're recovered in reverse order from the last to the first. And you indicated that Joseph was the beginning of the "last." Does that mean if there's 20 in there, it will go down from here to the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> and go in that order?

**DS:** Well, the way in which the work of the last days unfolds is to begin at the "last," which is the good place, the place that had been swept away. All of the indications are that it was to begin in the Americas, among what would be regarded as Gentiles; that's where it's to

begin. So that would be the “last.” The “first” (which is going to become the last) are the people in Israel/the Jews, the place where it all began.

Right now, an effort has been made through a series of meetings and talks and conferences that have gone on along the Mormon corridor; and then from California to Atlanta, reaching out to the Christians; and then in, I think it was South Carolina; and we’ve had a conference in the Far East; and we’ve had a couple of conferences in England and Scotland.

We’re not yet in a position to undertake the “first,” which is the Jews—but the Hebrew translation of the Book of Mormon is done. Right now the only thing that’s left to be done is for the text to be smoothed out and all of the different translator’s efforts to be reviewed so that it has a harmony to it all, and we are paying people who are native Hebrew speakers to read the text. They are reading the text, and they are commenting, and the comments are going to the translators, and the translators are looking at what the people who are fluent in Hebrew have to say before we render it into a final version. We’re trying to get the text... We’re trying to find a printer for the text that will print in either Jerusalem (which would be preferred) or Tel Aviv (which is what seems to be likely) and to have the book when it rolls out to be a product of Israel. It’s being translated into a form of Hebrew that was spoken 600 BC and earlier, so even some of the later books of the Old Testament that were written after 600 BC contain vocabulary and language structure that we’re not using. It’s all being translated into “600 BC and earlier” Hebrew language.

How many groups of the “scattered remnants of Israel” will be encountered as the effort that began with Joseph Smith and is continuing now apace among us will be reached before the Jews are approached, I don’t know. And I don’t know where they’re located. And I don’t know how many of them there are. But I do know that the restoration institution that has the most wealth, the most power, and the most influence—and the ability to do something on a big scale—signed an actual agreement with Israel that they will not proselytize in Israel, that they will not send missionaries over there, and that they will not publish the Book of Mormon in Hebrew. There are some people who have made an effort to turn the Book of Mormon into a Hebrew book, and one of them came out in print this year—but it’s a modern-Hebrew language version that if you were to hand it to a rabbi, he would say, “It’s a fraud; it’s a fake.” It uses words that we’d never find in the Torah. You hand a Hebrew [rabbi] the version that we will put into print, and he would say, “Oy, vey! Reads like Scripture,” you know, “This is Torah.” So I don’t know how many, but the work...

I mean, everything that we do in the Restoration Archives effort has made so much material available, and modern translation programs make it possible to read and to listen and to have real-time translation done into a variety of languages so that, you know, artificial intelligence is running ahead of us. Our materials are gonna be available to other people speaking other languages more quickly than WE are able to convert some of our material into French and Spanish—and we’re just beginning a Japanese effort. But the modern-English version of the Book of Mormon—Covenant of Christ—makes translation into other languages using language translation programs far, far more efficient, because the King Jamesian language doesn’t work in a translation program. It... You could do the translation, and then you’d have to spend years editing it. The modern-English version will go over, and within a few months, you can sort out anything that turns to be problematic.

So how the Lord goes about getting the natural branches reconnected back to the mother tree is a labor that the Lord Himself gets involved with. He sends servants, and they do what they're told/when they're told/how they're told, and how it plays into the success that the Lord of the vineyard intends to achieve is really in the wisdom of God.

I used to be a lot more inquisitive than I am now. It seems like when you're too inquisitive, you just get more work to do. So I'm content to wait and let it unfold, rather than push the Lord to sweep the corners of the room out for me. Sometimes you don't like what you find there.

Okay, so there... Was there any other...? Did you have a...?

**Question 2:** Yeah, so Zenos is someone who obviously had the writings that were given and put in the book of Jacob, but Zenos doesn't appear, to my knowledge, anywhere else. Do you think there will be any (I don't know) writings that might come forth, such as maybe through the Dead Sea Scrolls or something like that where his name emerges?

**DS:** I don't know, but I have the conviction—I think I've said this recently—I have the conviction that the Book of Mormon authors followed the example of Nephi, just like Jacob followed the example of Nephi. Mormon didn't necessarily feel obligated to follow that same effort in his abridgment. For example, if Mormon were abridging the small plates of Nephi, I'm not sure that you would be able to segregate the words of Isaiah and separate them from the words of Nephi; I think it may not have appeared at all as a quote, and the Allegory of the Olive Tree may not have appeared as Jacob quoting Zenos; it may have just appeared as part of a sermon in which Jacob went up to the temple and he taught this stuff without giving attribution—because he was an abridger of a larger record, and he may have assumed that we would have the ability (if we've got the same material as he had on the brass plates) to know when someone is being quoted without, you know, quotation marks or attribution. The apostle Paul does that in his letters. He writes, and he quotes Isaiah, quotes the Psalms, but he doesn't, you know, say, "This is taken from the Psalms; this is taken from Isaiah; this is taken from Malachi." He just weaves it into what he's saying.

I think the Book of Mormon has... I mean, perhaps as much as 80% of the words in the Book of Mormon (and I'm just making an estimate and being generous), perhaps as much as 80% of what we have in the Book of Mormon is actually lifted from the brass plates, woven into the sermons, woven into the statements, woven into the stories. Even their own history can be analogous to something on the brass plates, and the description incorporates part of the language on the brass plates of a similar event, among a similar circumstance at an earlier time, and we don't have the ability to segregate it out and to pull it apart and to say, "This is taken from the brass plates." I *think* from some of the things that are said about the "brightness of the brass plates shining forth," that that might actually have already been accomplished. It might be in our hands. And because of the way in which the structure of the book is put, we're sort of oblivious to the potential that we're really looking at a whole bunch of quotes taken from the brass plates and woven seamlessly.

I mean, Joseph Smith, the First Vision: "When I came to myself, I asked, you know, which church I should join?" And then what follows is a statement that weaves together (oh, what

is it?) Malachi, Isaiah, the Apostle Paul. I mean, the list of things that he's told, you know, that the professors were all corrupt, that they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness but they deny the power thereof. I mean those are all scriptural statements from earlier on, and it's Christ who is saying this to Joseph Smith.

Lehi gets caught up in this big vision; he sees the Son of Man. He comes to him, and He hands him a book. You know, the vision of John on the Isle of Patmos, "Who's worthy to open the book? No one can be found in Heaven and Earth." And then the Lamb of God opens the book.

And so, what are we reading? What are the books? What are the statements that are being quoted from Scripture? Where did they come from? How many of the words, for example, in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Corinthians that get quoted about faith, hope, and charity in the Book of Mormon **did not originate with Paul OR with Mormon**? How many of those words were lifted directly—**perhaps from Zenos**—and appear on the brass plates? And there are people that say, "How on earth—HOW ON EARTH—can Mormon quote from the Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians?" Well, hireling priest, it's because they're both quoting from a much earlier source. And if you would get rid of your whoredoms and your abominations and your envies and your strifes and your secret conspiracies and repent and to come unto Christ, your humble heart would allow you to accept the idea that God has indeed spoken similar words to other nations, and some of those similar words are being quoted from a record that goes way back into antiquity. So...

**Question 2 (continued):** Well, you had made the comment that even in the Answer [to the Prayer for Covenant], words were grafted in there that were supposed to be there. That kind of ties into this and everything else.

**DS:** Yeah, and I didn't realize how close they were to words that appear within the... I mean, if—you can do the search—but if you look at the record of that part of the covenant that I read you and words that are lifted out of Mormon, it's almost directly a quote, and I did not realize that until sometime later. (Yeah, well, that leads into a whole 'nother different subject, but...)

Okay, so are we done? Are we good?

Yeah?

**Question 3:** Has the Covenant of Christ version of the Allegory of the Olive Tree, has that influenced your reading of the Redemption of Zion in the T&C or the Doctrine and Covenants?

**DS:** Yeah, I think that it becomes really clear that the Lord had a very specific purpose in mind for the family of man. He wanted the family to be a group of people that regard Christ as the root and themselves as connected to the root, and that all of the work that has been done from the time that Israel began to get pruned and scattered has been done very wittingly and very deliberately with, ultimately, the intention to bring it all back together again and tie it into one neat, tidy, *family* connection. And you can see when Joseph Smith began to organize the church, the First Presidency were akin to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;

and the Quorum of the Twelve were akin to the twelve sons of Jacob; and the Quorum of the Seventy was akin to the 72 members of the family that went in with Joseph and the family into Egypt when Joseph was still in favor with the Pharaoh. And so, when Joseph was putting a pattern together at the foundation of the Restoration, he was doing something that was akin to what the New Testament church had done.

Christ tells the apostles, “You’re gonna sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel,” because the patriarchs who had headed those tribes had not necessarily proved their valiance during their mortality and probably didn’t deserve or earn the right to sit in judgment of their fellow man since they’d fallen short. But that connects the organization of the twelve apostles to the family of Israel in Christ’s analogy to them about, you know, what role they will have in the eternities judging the tribes.

So yeah, as you read the allegory and you look at what has happened with the New Testament church, what has happened with the Restoration at the beginning, and when you look at what failed... I mean, one of the things that—when you’re talking about the *last* effort, the *last* pruning, the *last* digging and watering—one of the things that occurs to me, at least, is that we know what hasn’t worked.

What hasn’t worked—EVER—is a hierarchy. It’s never worked. There is no indication in the Genesis account of Enoch’s city (in OUR Genesis account—it would include the LDS Pearl of Great Price book of Moses), there’s nothing to indicate that Enoch assumed any role other than teaching and preaching. And Joseph Smith clarified (in a talk) that Melchizedek was not the king over any land; he was called the “king of righteousness” because of what he preached. So if we’ve failed with *organizations* to have ever produced Zion—and the only two mentions of the Zion communities occur when someone is only preaching and they’re only teaching, and it happened in both instances, and there’s no indication of authority or hierarchy or control or dominion; there’s just teaching going on—then I look at how quickly and utterly institutions have become corrupted and the language about “the top and the branches all being equal,” and I cannot conceive how it would be possible to put together *organizationally* something that would create this equality/this oneness. If someone says, “I’m bigger, and I’m better than you; I’m more important than you, and you need to take my direction!”...

I mean, how did Enoch go about accomplishing what Enoch accomplished? He apparently taught, preached, and persuaded. He didn’t demand, and he didn’t command. Melchizedek got regarded with some considerable esteem by the people because he taught them true principles. At the end... Joseph Smith created an institutional church. At the end, one reasonable reading of Joseph Smith’s history is that at the end, he was walking away from the church; that it was just a schoolmaster to bring you somewhere, but he was no longer wanting to be there. And Hyrum had assumed a role, and Hyrum would graduate and move on as well. It was just a temporary schoolmaster.

**Question 3 (continued):** So in the end of the allegory, is it the righteous house of Israel? They become ripe in righteousness at the same time that the wicked become ripe in iniquity?

**DS:** Yeah, that's one of the parables that Christ spoke about: wheat and tares. And in the Answer to the Prayer [for Covenant], He talks about how the tares are ripening, and He inquires, "Yeah, what of the wheat?" Because we have an obligation also to ripen.

You know, the gospel—particularly the gospel as explained in Covenant of Christ and the Book of Mormon—the gospel and the redemption that comes through repentance and returning to Christ is a vitally important, singular, and easy step, okay? And that's to hear the message about Christ, to believe and accept the message about Christ, to repent, and to want to be something better than you are, and to be baptized, at which point you will get the Holy Ghost, and then you begin a journey. The journey that the Book of Mormon and Covenant of Christ describes starts at that moment but doesn't end there. That's where the Evangelicals want to make it a single one-off "You're saved! Hallelujah, praise Jesus! I am now going to Heaven," whereas the Book of Mormon says that then the Holy Ghost will teach you all things that you must do. And it will say it is given unto many to know the mysteries of God, and if they repent and they follow that, they will then gain greater understanding of the mysteries of God until they understand them in full. And then we've got the closing of the vision of the Three Degrees of Glory in which unspeakable things are available that aren't lawful for men to utter, but they become available. And Joseph Smith's First Vision, after Christ has told him not to join any of the churches, goes on to say *and many other things did he say unto me [that] I cannot write at this time* (JSH 2:5). "I cannot write at this time" doesn't mean I'm in such a hurry and I have so little ink and time that I can't put it down. It means: I am forbidden. Unspeakable things.

The beginning of redemption is very easy, but where it takes you from there, time and time again, "I was about to write further, but the Lord commanded me not to so I'm not gonna include it in my record." And how many times does it say in the record, "Only 1% of what happened or what was taught or what was said has been recorded" in the record that we've got? Well, why would 99% of it—if Jesus went to all of the trouble of teaching it—why would Jesus waste 99% of the words that He employed when He taught them? I guarantee you He didn't waste a single syllable. Only 1% is there because that's all that we need to get started on the right path to return to Him, and the journey with the Holy Ghost is intended to be an ever-increasing, ever-unfolding, brighter and brighter until the perfect day experience that's described in D&C 93, which I think is also T&C 93, as it turns out. (Occasionally the numbering coincides.)

Yeah, yeah—you had your hand up.

**Question 4:** I have a question. So probably the most interesting part to me in the allegory happens halfway through, where all the trees have become corrupted and the lord of the vineyard is actually willing and wants to burn them all down. And yet the servant has the ear of the lord and says, "Don't. Wait a little longer." The question is: Obviously the servant (I don't know if he has a name, if that's Adam or whoever) has some weight to tell the lord of the vineyard to halt the destruction. [unintelligible] ...the lord of the vineyard is the one who is patient [unintelligible] It's interesting to see that the servant has the words here.

**DS:** So Abraham was visited by messengers on the plains, and he ran, and he had a calf slaughtered, and he had a roast made, and he entertained them and wanted to know what

was up with them. And they said, “Oh, we’re headed to Sodom where we’re gonna destroy the city.” And Abraham says, “Well, what if there are 50 righteous people in the city?” And the Lord says, “If there’s 50 righteous people, I won’t destroy Sodom.” And he said, “Well, what if there are only 45? Are you gonna save for the loss of five; for the want of five people you’re gonna kill everyone?” So, I mean, it almost sounds like a Jewish merchant bargaining “for the want of five, I mean, for the want of 10,” and he negotiates it down and down and down, and the number finally gets so small that Abraham feels reasonably secure that there’s gonna be that number found in the city, and so they depart. But they didn’t find the minimal number, and the city was destroyed. Well, why is the mission so much less merciful than Abraham? They weren’t. It’s the master trying to make sure that the servant has the right heart. If you’re gonna keep the servant in your employ, you want to know that he’s not... He’s just not a destroyer; he’s a husbandman, like Adam, given the dominion as a husbandman to cultivate and care for it, not to abuse and exploit it.

And so, yeah, I think what you’re seeing in that moment in the allegory is an example, like Abraham, that He wants to make sure that the servant that gets employed has a heart like God’s own heart so that He knows that He will be dealing with a merciful minister who will look out for others and have their salvation in mind. Yeah.

So, what time is it? How long have we been here? Okay...

**Question 5:** Denver?

**DS:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Question 5:** Just maybe to wrap up. In the glossary, the definition of fruit, it says this: “Throughout Zenos’ allegory of the olive tree, fruit means ‘salvation,’ in a covenantal sense. It requires the promises made to the fathers...to be the same covenant given to you.” And that was... That’s in *Preserving the Restoration*, which was written before the covenant. Any other thoughts or insight on that? It’s a... To me, that’s kind of a summary of your message tonight.

**DS:** Yeah, and I... Just like the gospel message and the acceptance of Christ and the willingness to follow Him and to be baptized and to receive the Holy Ghost is the beginning of a journey, I believe that that journey now has been amplified and added upon by giving us the Covenant of Christ, by giving us the covenant itself in 2017 that was a harbinger leading, in turn, to this, and it is not all out in public view and only gradually unfolded, “carefully, patiently, solemnly, with time, experience...” and the list of things that Joseph included in his letter from Liberty Jail about the mind of man needing to expand so that it reaches the highest heavens and searches into and contemplates the darkest abyss.

I believe that all of the things that the Lord has given and all of the tools that we’ve been equipped with are intended—by inspiration, through the Holy Ghost—to let our minds increase in understanding until we arrive at the point that we are able and suitable to stand in the presence of God and to take in—directly from Him—His message of salvation and that there is a journey underfoot that begins with conversion. But He’s said that He’s going to add thereto many things. And I think this was one of the “many things” that He had in mind when He promised in the Covenant (in the Answer to the Prayer and in the Covenant)

that He would add many things to us. But I think there's more coming. Anytime impatient and ambitious souls think that they know better than what the Lord knows and can do better or more than what the Lord is actually doing—and there's a great deal that is underway that doesn't roll out into public view until it's done; this is a good example: The Covenant of Christ was a multi-year work that didn't roll out into public visibility until it was completed—the Lord is always going to carefully, patiently, methodically move His work along, and people who are ambitious, impatient, in a hurry, and want to accomplish in haste what can only be accomplished patiently and methodically...

You think about transplanting a young, tender branch and grafting it back onto the mother root: you know, if you irritate that branch, if you're out there messing with that branch before you know what nature can do by patience and long-suffering, you're likely to kill it. And there are many people who have killed themselves by their zeal and their impatience, who have wandered off into dark corners that were folks I once had hope for, folks I once shared a kinship with; and it's unfortunate, but it's their choice. And the trimming away very often is voluntary. It's not that we kick people out. It's that people go somewhere else and do something else because they choose to do that, and thus they've trimmed themselves away, and that's fine by me. I would rather have a gathering of people who are rigidly, firmly committed, and devoted, patient, and easy to be entreated than folks willing to jump up and say, "I know better, because you've forgotten this, or you've forgotten that!" The Lord forgot absolutely nothing when He clarified language in Covenant of Christ and, in particular, for the allegory—because **there aren't more than one being preserved**. It's one tree.

I don't know what the Egyptian-script form of the Hebrew idea that got etched onto the plates that referred to this phenomenon of the vineyard actually stated, but from the overall context of the Allegory of the Olive Tree, it is very clear that there was one tree from which shoots were taken and transplanted elsewhere that grew in wild places, and there were wild things that were grafted in; and ultimately, the wild ones grafted in failed, produced bitter fruit, had to be removed; and ultimately, the transplants had to be returned to the original. So when you're returning the original branches back to the mother tree, it is perhaps the case that the Egyptian-script language that got used referred to that as "trees" instead of "original branches." But in Covenant of Christ, the Lord is the one who rendered the language "original branches back to the original tree," and did not talk about taking a bunch of wild trees with bad roots and moving those over—because the bad roots that belong to those in the nethermost parts of the vineyard were bad to begin with, and they were bad at the end. You don't want to go back to the Druid religion or witchcraft or tribal nonsense. We don't want to go back to the Roman Pantheon or the Greek mythology. None of that stuff belongs. We don't need the Egyptian polymorphic gods. We don't need any of that nonsense. They're bad roots. We're trying to get back only a singular religion, which existed at the time of Adam, that got preserved by the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (who re-named Jacob, "Israel," whose posterity is the one back to which we are to be grafted and which is currently underway). And I know of no place else you can go where you can find that regrafting actively underway other than here. Everywhere else is just some sort of vague Evangelical notion. So...

**Audience Member:** Amen.

**Audience Member:** Thank you very much.

**DS:** There it is. Okay, so we can turn the tape off, and we can all get out of here?

**Audience Member:** Thank you.

**DS:** Yeah, thank you!