



Type: Book Chapter

Language Themes in Jacob 5: "The Vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel" (Isaiah 5:7)

Author(s): Arthur Henry King

Source: *The Allegory of the Olive Tree: The Olive, the Bible, and Jacob 5*

Editor(s): Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch

Published: Provo, UT/Salt Lake City; FARMS/Deseret Book, 1994

Page(s): 140-173



7

Language Themes in Jacob 5 “The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel” (Isaiah 5:7)

Arthur Henry King

The language of Zenos’s parable appears to be richer rhetorically than most of what is in the Book of Mormon, though the richness of 2 Nephi 9 approaches it. The parable is reflected in 2 Nephi 15:1–7 and is a version of Isaiah 5.¹ It seems possible that Zenos’s parable is the oldest piece in the Book of Mormon, except for materials in the book of Ether.

Like Lehi’s and Nephi’s dream, our parable is a prophecy of human history; but more concentrated, more restricted. Like the dream, too, it is not a parable of exact allegorical equivalencies, but symbolic equivalencies. The Lord is both human and divine (and this assumes the incarnation). There is identification between Jehovah and Christ.

Are the questions that the Lord asks rhetorical questions or real? I think the answer is that they are real rhetorical questions: they have a pedagogical intent. They are asked of the servant. And the servant, again, should not be taken precisely as having exact correspondence. His principal rhetorical function is to be there to make the narrative possible in terms of conversation. He is like the confidant in a classical Greek or French play.

Analyzing the rhetoric of Jacob 5 means not an analysis

of narrative and discourse, but of all the elements—one might call them the concomitant elements—such as length of sentence, clause, phrase; stress, intonation; word, sense, and image; scheme, trope; metaphor, topos, myth. What we obtain in this way may be regarded as “rhetorical truth,” in distinction from “logical truth.” Our meditation on the scriptures need not be prompted only by the syntactical and the lexical. A way of putting it all together might be to call it the “constructional.”

The material in Jacob 5 is so rich that I am omitting any consideration of the repetition of sound and its variations. We are dealing with an inspired translation, but an inspired translation can make use only of what is available in the target language; and equivalents of sound, stress, and intonation are likely to be yet further removed from the original than the other elements. Even in inspired language we may expect variation in rhetorical competence.

For example, it is sometimes said that the rhetoric of the Authorized (King James) Version of the Bible is finer than that of the originals from which it is translated. Joseph Smith thought the Luther translation superior to the Authorized Version.² The sixteenth-century Swedish translation of the Bible is inferior to the Authorized Version. Granted our belief in continuing revelation, we should not confuse language differences in the details of translation with the nineteenth-century doctrine of evolution, certainly not in the sense that things get better and better. A sinful community debases its language, a virtuous community improves it; and English in our time is debased.

My language now is less good than it might have been in the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century, the seventeenth century, or the sixteenth century. The Authorized Version itself reaches back to the greater simplicity and

straightforwardness of the written English of the Middle Ages. But it does not follow that as we go back in time the language necessarily becomes simpler or more straightforward. There are periods that are richer in rhetoric, and periods that are plainer. Just as the delineation of patterns on pottery becomes generation by generation less precise, so language may become more slipshod. Language is highly vulnerable to the sin of sloth.

With those preliminary remarks to establish a universe of discourse between us, I pass to the “construction” of Jacob 5. *Construction* is not the best word, since it means “building together.” Speech, whether written or spoken, is an outflow from long immersion in the linguistic tradition of the culture. We might rather speak of the mold or the form. The mold contains an influx or outflux—according to the end you look at.

There are twenty-one paragraphs in this parable. They are marked in the first edition (1830), but more recent editions are divided into verses. Verses are essential for teaching and reference, but we need to have a Book of Mormon in which the paragraphs are also marked, as they are in some editions of the Bible. The rhetorical flow is better seen and heard when the paragraphs are there.

Our first reaction to the scriptures is not to understand them, but to feel them, to experience them. That is why even very young children need to be exposed to the reading of the scriptures aloud in the family circle. The message of the scriptures is not for the “mind,” but for the soul. Concentrating too much on “plain sense,” we may lose the experiential phase, and thereby never gain a total experience of the scriptures. The meaning of the scriptures is not the plain sense, but the total effect. That is the major reason why we don’t want the Book of Mormon reduced to the

level of the New English Bible, as contrasted with the Authorized Version. The tradition of several hundred years, which we share, has almost gone. Great effort is needed to preserve it.

For the convenience of those who do not have a copy of the facsimile of the 1830 edition, here are the paragraphs:

Paragraph 1: verses 1–9

Paragraph 2: verses 10–13

Paragraph 3: verses 14–15

Paragraph 4: verses 16–18

Paragraph 5: verses 19–20

Paragraph 6: verses 21–22

Paragraph 7: verse 23

Paragraph 8: verses 24–25

Paragraph 9: verses 26–28

Paragraph 10: verse 29

Paragraph 11: verse 30

Paragraph 12: verses 31–34

Paragraph 13: verses 35–37

Paragraph 14: verses 38–40

Paragraph 15: verses 41–47 (note the length of this)

Paragraph 16: verse 48

Paragraph 17: verses 49–54 (another long one)

Paragraph 18: verses 55–69 (the parable's main speech)

Paragraph 19: verses 70–71

Paragraph 20: verses 72–74

Paragraph 21: verses 75–77

Each of the three main speeches is one paragraph; all the other paragraphs are comparatively short. They sometimes coincide with a single verse in the modern editions. It is clear that those who divided the Book of Mormon into verses had difficulty in keeping the verses of comparative length. Claims of rhetoric and plain sense may be opposed:

verses in this parable are from three to eighteen lines long. On the whole, the longer the paragraph, the more intense the message and the more emotion.

Each of the paragraphs except the first is introduced by the phrase, "And it came to pass." The first paragraph begins with "Behold." It is obvious why it should not begin with "And it came to pass," because the pause is longer here and this is the beginning of the parable proper. In the current version of the Book of Mormon, chapter 5 begins with "Behold, my brethren," which may be regarded as a prelude to the actual parable, which begins at verse 2. But in the 1830 edition, the parable begins well into chapter 3 of the book of Jacob.³

Readers tend to become irritated by the repetition of "and it came to pass"; but they should realize that the scriptures are intended, in the first place, not to be read in silence but to be heard. What is intended to be heard contains repetitions that the reader may feel he does not need. If the reader will read aloud to himself or to others, instead of merely reading silently, he will begin to feel the ritualistic as well as prompting effects of these repetitions, particularly this repetition of "and it came to pass." Above all, more than promptings and ritual, it is the constant reminder of the passage of time. In the Book of Mormon we feel the passage of time far more strongly than in the Bible; one of the reasons is that large portions of it have been consistently edited by one editor: whereas the Bible is a compilation and not a total as a work of art in the same way as the Book of Mormon.

The twenty-one paragraphs fall into two major groups of approximately the same length. The division is at the point where the Lord's crucial speech begins; verse 40 ends the first part and verse 41 begins the second. Up to verse 40 there are 325 lines and 40 verses, with an average of eight

lines per verse. From verse 41 to the end there are 336 lines, 37 verses, and the average is nine lines per verse. So the two halves are well balanced.

The first half (lines 1–3 are a prologue) is narrative dialogue, which forms a whole and is not readily divisible into parts. And so the first forty verses form a unit of narrative dialogue. The Lord tells us what he's going to do and what he's doing. This is a lively, a graphic, way of narrating. It is supported here and there by the historic present. In our modern edition, this has sometimes been taken out and replaced by the past tense: for example, *sayeth* has been replaced by *said*.

In this paper, the spelling and punctuation of the parable is that used in the facsimile of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. The punctuation is rhetorical, in that punctuation indicates how to read the work aloud; verb forms frequently differ from those of the modern edition; deletions change the rhythm of the phrases in ways most noticeable when read aloud.

- The second half of the parable does divide into sections:
- a. the Lord's quandary: "What could I have done more?" (41–47);
 - b. the Lord's decision to continue: "Spare it a little longer" (48–54);
 - c. the Lord's main speech of action and prophecy (55–69);
 - d. bringing in other servants (70–74);
 - e. the Lord's final speech (75–77).

I need to say somewhat more about the second part (from verse 41 onward).

In verses 41–46, the Lord summarizes the situation and expresses his quandary. In 47 he repeats from 41: "What could I have done more in my vineyard?" and then pro-

ceeds to expand that in the crucial question and self-answer: "Have I slackened mine hand, that I have not nourished it? Nay; I have nourished it, and I have digged it, and I have pruned it, and I have dunged it; and I have stretched forth mine hand almost all the day long; and the end draweth nigh." The rhetorical patterns are intensified in these verses, some of which will be examined in detail later.

The next passage is the Lord's decision to spare his vineyard a little longer (48–54). The servant inaugurates this decision after introducing a new idea—"Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard? Hath not the branches thereof overcome the roots, which are good?" (48). The word loftiness occurs only once more in the Book of Mormon; this rarity emphasizes the word.

The Lord's first reaction to the servant's new idea is not immediate agreement. He reiterates his intent to hew down the trees and cast them into the fire (49). It looks as if he is pushing the servant to make the decision, or at least to suggest it, and the servant duly does so, saying, "Spare it a little longer" (50); and the Lord accedes with, "Yea, I will spare it a little longer" (51). This is a brief parallel to a longer dialogue between the Lord and Abraham in Genesis 18:23–32, where Abraham pleads with the Lord to spare Sodom and Gomorrah.

Then follows the section of the Lord's prophecy and action (55–69). Immediately after agreeing to the servant's suggestion that the trees should further be spared, the Lord imposes action—the immediacy is such that we would presume that the Lord had been prepared to continue. That would mean that the Lord's decision to hew down the trees at this point functioned more to find out how the servant would react than as a decision. In the main speech of action and prophecy (beginning at 55), repetition is again intensi-

fied, especially between 62 and 69. The speech is one of firm decision, in contrast with the almost plaintive speech of the Lord at 41–47: “What could I have done more?”

Already at 61, the Lord tells the servant to go and call servants, but he does not have that implemented until 70, when the preliminary action by the Lord and the servant is completed and the servant is sent to call in servants to widen the action. The newly recruited servants go forth as missionaries under the pressure of time (71). The sense of urgency that is present throughout the parable till now does not ease off until 74, when the Lord is satisfied with the fruit that is coming in. The last section (75–77) ends the parable with a sense of breadth and ease corresponding with the Millennium (75–76), the last hundred years with Satan (77), and the destruction of the vineyard, which no longer has a function. This last period is prophetic. The past and the present are there together in 75, and 76 is the future.

So with this general outline of the parable into its rhetorically determined sections, I turn now to the detail of repetition and variation. I am not concerned with the almost mechanical collection of the classically rhetorical repetitions of words, and so forth, because that is easily done by patience. All I am concerned with for the rest of this presentation is the kind of repetition and variation that is relevant to the parable as a whole.

I have picked out two aspects of repetition that concern the whole piece. One is repetition with variation, and the other the distribution of a repeated word or phrase throughout the piece. Here is a simple example of repetition with variation:

What could I have done more *for* my vineyard? (41).
 But what could I have done more *in* my vineyard? (47).
 What could I have done more *for* my vineyard? (49).

These lines present the statement, a slightly varied statement, and back to the original statement; a basic pattern.

Here are some longer examples:

- a. I will *prune* it, and *dig* about it, and *nourish* it (4).
- b. He *pruned* it, and *digged* about it, and *nourished* it (5).
- c. It should be *digged* about, and *pruned*, and *nourished* (11).
- d. Let us *prune* it, and *dig* about it, and *nourish* it a little longer (27).

Examples *a* and *d* are both present tense, but *d* has *let us* instead of *a's I will*. Examples *b* and *c* are both past tense, but *c* is passive rather than active. Also, while *b* and *d* have the same order as *a*, in *c* the order has changed.

At verse 47 we have a further development that I call accretion, when something is added:

"I have *nourished* it, and I have *digged* it, and I have *pruned* it, and I have *dunged* it." The word *dunged* comes in for the first time—and there is the further variation of the perfect tense. There is also anaphora of "I have," "I have," "I have," and the polysyndeton—the repetition of *and* in front of each verb. The sentence has been lengthened; and that length is a further way of adding to the feeling. All these reflect the increased emotive element, for this is the highly pathetic speech in the middle of the parable.

The final repetition is at verse 76, the end of the parable: "For the last time have I [*have I* instead of *I have*] *nourished* my vineyard, and *pruned* it, and *dug* about it [not *dig* or *digged* but *dug*] and *dunged* it." The change to *dug* produced sonance (similarity of sound) with *dunged* and the order of the verbs is again different. *Nourished* comes at the beginning: it is the most comprehensive of the verbs; and in this final use, it is brought to the beginning for emphasis. *Pruned*

and *dug* and *dunged* are matter of fact, but *nourished* has more feeling; there are more emotive associations with it.

Note that the rhetorical order may ignore the chronological order. For that matter, the chronological order itself may vary. From the chronological point of view I should expect *pruned, dunged, digged, and nourished*; but there might well be times when the dunging and the digging would come before pruning. Yet it is almost essential that the dunging should come before the digging, and for purposes of emphasis that has been ignored and dunging has come to the end.

The most powerful examples of variation with change of order and accretion are in verses 63 and 66 in the middle of the great speech of prophecy and action, the strong speech. The first, verse 63, is concerned with the antithesis of *last* and *first*, and the second is about the antithesis of *bad* and *good*. These two complementary antitheses are put together in the middle of this speech: "Graft in the branches: begin at the *last*, that they may be *first*, and that the *first* may be *last*, and dig about the trees, both *old* and *young*, the *first* and *last*, and the *last* and the *first*, that all may be nourished once again for the *last* time" (63).

The main point of this verse is the antithesis, and it gives us the clue to this parable. In the first part of the parable, the effort is made to save practically everybody; this is repeated again and again. In the middle of the parable the word *bad* comes in for the first time, and this verse is where it comes in: *bad* occurs (all but one example) in the second half of the parable. Seventy-five percent of the uses of *bad* in the Book of Mormon are in the second part of this chapter. Now that *bad* has come in, the *bad* has to be got out, and that is the solution to the situation. The introduction of the word *bad* in the second part together with the *first* and the

last, and its implication for the sense of the whole parable, is an example of rhetorical truth. It has not been made semantically explicit, but it has been made rhetorically clear.

In the next verse with antithesis, verse 66, *the bad* and *the good* come in here to complement *the first* and *the last*. The reason is that the *first* and the *last* and the *bad* and the *good* are not the same categories; they are put in chiasmic relation to one another:

It grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard; wherefore, ye shall clear away the *bad*, according as the *good* shall grow, that the root and the top may be equal in strength, until the *good* shall overcome the *bad*, and the *bad* be hewn down and cast into the fire, that they cumber not the ground of my vineyard; and thus will I sweep away the *bad* out of my vineyard.

Note that the top's being equal in strength goes back to the servant's remark, "Is it not the loftiness of the vineyard? Hath not the branches thereof overcame the roots, which are good?" (48). Note also the strength of the word *sweep* here; this is the only use of the word in the parable. We see very clearly what the decision is.

Here are further examples of accretion and variation:

These which I have *plucked off*, I will *cast into the fire*, and burn them (9).

It will soon become ripened, that it may be *cast into the fire* (37).

All the trees of my vineyard are good for nothing, save it be to be *hewn down* and *cast into the fire*. (42; *hewn down* has been added for the first time.)

Because . . . I *plucked* not the *branches* thereof, and *cast them into the fire* (45).

It grieveth me that I should *hew down all the trees of my vineyard*, and *cast them into the fire* (47).

It grieveth me that I should lose *the trees of my vineyard*; wherefore, ye shall clear away the *bad*, according as the good shall grow, that the root and the top may be equal in strength, until the good shall overcome the *bad*, and the *bad* be *hewn down and cast into the fire*, that they cumber not the ground of *my vineyard* (66).

The *bad* shall be *cast away* (69).

The wild branches began to be *plucked off*, and to be *cast away* (73).

Even until the *bad* had been *cast away* out of the *vineyard* (74).

The *bad* is *cast away* (75).

And the *bad* will I *cast away* into its own place (77).

That means that in the last part of the parable the stress is upon success and not upon punishment.

We come now to *distribution*. This is dealt with as general distribution or local distribution (either occurring throughout the piece or in a specific place or places of it), first half and second half, initial, initial and final, final.

Distribution in General

I have divided this up into words and phrases that run right through the parable, and others where there are gaps in the uniformity of use, for we need to consider why the gaps occur.

Every paragraph in the actual parable begins with, "And it came to pass." As we have said already, the task of the phrase is to nudge the attention, which is why it naturally occurs at the beginning of paragraphs, but it occurs elsewhere when particular attention has to be drawn to the narrative's taking a further step.

The second main nudger of attention is *behold*, which we shall deal with when we discuss gaps in uniformity since *behold* is not used consistently throughout.

Apart from these two nudgers, the most frequent phrases are of course associated with the main image. There are many of these, and we shall consider only the outstanding ones.

The *wild branch* in the singular occurs only in the first forty-five verses of the parable, that is, a little over the first half. I think the reason is that more attention is given in the first, the narrative part, to an individual tree and an individual branch:

How comest thou hither to plant this tree, or this *branch* of the tree? (21).

I have planted another *branch* of the tree also (23).

Look hither, and behold another *branch* also, which I have planted (24).

And the wild fruit of the last, had overcome that part of the tree which brought forth good fruit, even that the *branch* had withered away and died (40).

Behold, this last, whose *branch* hath withered away (43).

Because that I plucked not the branches thereof, and cast them into the fire, behold, they have overcome the good *branch*, that it hath withered away (45).

Of the word in the plural, *branches*, there are twenty-six examples in the first part and twenty-four in the second. The singular *branch* occurs in the first half; it is clear that more attention is being paid to this image in the first half of the parable than in the second.

The words *natural* and *wild* are used in opposition. *Natural branches* occurs seven times in the first part and six in the second. *Wild branches* occurs five times in the first and twice in the second. But *wild* is also used elsewhere: *wild olive tree* (9, 10, 34; *wild olive tree* occurs again in the second part at 46), *wild tree* (18), *wild olive branches* (17), and *wild fruit* in

contrast with *tame fruit* (25) and *good fruit* (40; in the second part also at 45).

Natural is also used several times of *tree* (55, 56, 67, 68).

Root and *roots* are used regularly throughout, and that follows from the fact that the main theme of this image-sequence is that the roots and the branches should be "equal." Since more attention is normally paid to the branch group than to the root group in reading this parable, I think it is worth while to cite the *root/roots* contexts, because these contexts do more than anything else to make the whole pattern of reference to the image of the olive tree clear. First are efforts to save the branches:

I take away many of these young and tender branches, and I will graft them whithersoever I will; and it mattereth not that if it so be, that the root of this tree will perish (8).

Then, in verse 11, there is a change of plan:

It grieveth me that I should lose this tree; wherefore, that perhaps I might preserve the roots thereof that they perish not, that I might preserve them unto myself, I have done this thing (11).

The importance of the roots becomes paramount:

The branches of the wild tree hath taken hold of the moisture of the root thereof, that the root thereof hath brought forth much strength; and because of the much strength of the root thereof, the wild branches hath brought forth tame fruit (18).

Later, the branches, not the roots, have saved the situation:

Because thou didst graft in the branches of the wild olive tree, they have nourished the roots, that they are alive, and they have not perished (34).

But the roots are not forgotten:

I know that the roots are good; and for mine own purpose I have preserved them; and because of their much strength, they have hitherto brought forth from the wild branches, good fruit (36).

In contrast to verse 34, the branches overcome the roots:

But behold, the wild branches have grown, and have overran the roots thereof; and because that the wild branches have overcome the roots thereof, it hath brought forth much evil fruit (37).

Then comes the key reference to equalization:

And it came to pass that the servant, sayeth unto his master, Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard? Hath not the branches thereof overcame the roots, which are good? And because that the branches have overcame the roots thereof? For behold, they grew faster than the strength of the roots thereof, taking strength unto themselves (48).

The importance of the roots is again to the fore:

And this will I do, that the tree may not perish, that perhaps I may preserve unto myself the roots thereof, for mine own purpose. And behold, the roots of the natural branches of the tree which I planted whithersoever I would, are yet alive (53–54).

Again, the roots have the initiative:

We will nourish again the trees of the vineyard, and we will trim up the branches thereof; and we will pluck from the trees those branches which are ripened, that must perish, and cast them into the fire.—And this I do, that perhaps the roots thereof may take strength, because of their goodness; and because of the change of the branches, that the good may overcome the evil (58–59).

The effects of the branches and the roots are balanced finally:

And because that I have preserved the natural branches, and the roots thereof; and that I have grafted in the natural branches again, into their mother tree; and have preserved the roots of their mother tree, that perhaps the trees of my vineyard may bring forth again good fruit (60).

But the roots must not reject the graft:

Ye shall not clear away the bad thereof, all at once, lest the roots thereof should be too strong for the graft, and the graft thereof shall perish, and I lose the trees of my vineyard (65).

In consequence of the measured clearing out of the bad, the good flourishes:

Ye shall clear away the bad, according as the good shall grow, that the root and the top may be equal in strength, until the good shall overcome the bad (66).

Then comes that word *equal*, the solution of the problem being the equality of root and branch:

They did keep the root and the top thereof, equal, according to the strength thereof (73, here comes that word *equal*, the solution of the problem being the equality of root and branch).

There, clearly, is the solution.

There are twenty-three examples of *graft* in Jacob 5; with four only elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. In the second part of the parable, *graft* is used about twice as many times as in the first part. This is less usual of the other words used in this image—most have been more frequent in the first part. There is a gap between verse 34 and verse 52, where the word does not occur, but that is accounted for because

it is not used in the pathetic speech of the Lord from 41–47. The word obviously belongs to the action of the first part rather than the action of the second. However, the difficulty still exists that a *tree* represents the house of Israel and not *trees*. And there is some contradiction between the broader action of the second part and the fact that it still applies to only one tree: “The branches of the natural tree, will I graft into the natural branches of the tree” (68). There is some difficulty in reconciling the image of one tree and the image of a whole vineyard, but it is significant that of the singular *tree* there are thirty-one examples in part one and twelve examples in part two; whereas of the plural *trees*, there are no examples in part one and sixteen examples in part two. That shows the broader picture of the second part, although it does not entirely solve the problem of the one tree and a vineyard full of trees.

It is not surprising to find *graft* and *tree* together, since grafts are normally made in trees and not in branches.

With the word *nourish*, we are back at the normal preponderance of number in part one for this image. There are eleven examples of this group in part one and six in part two. On the other hand, the effective use of *nourish* is greater in part two than part one and comes to its climax in the last use of all: “For the last time have I nourished my vineyard” (76). *Nourished* is also part of the pattern of variation and accretion.

The *preserve* group has ten examples in each of parts one and two; on the other hand, the *perish* group has seven examples in the first part and only three in the second. That is surprising.

Good is used throughout, but has only six examples in part one and thirteen in part two. This definitely points to the work in the vineyard’s becoming more hopeful as time

goes on.⁴ Of the nineteen examples of *good*, ten are associated with fruit.

Finally, under distribution in general, we have the highly emotive word *grieveth*. Of the expression, "It grieveth me," there are eight examples. It begins early: "It grieveth me that I should lose this tree" (7); the phrase is repeated at 11 and 13. The situation becomes worse, as signified by the addition of *now*: "Now, it grieveth me that I should lose this tree" (32). The expression is used twice at the end of the Lord's pathetic speech: "It grieveth me that I should lose them" (46); and the climax: "It grieveth me that I should hew down all the trees of my vineyard, and cast them into the fire, that they should be burned" (47). In response to the servant's "spare it a little longer" (50), the Lord says, "Yea, I will spare it a little longer, for it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard" (51), which is a repetition of verse 46. The same phrase is used again at 66: "For it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard." It is not used again after that point.

We turn to the examples where an expression runs right through the parable, but there are gaps in the uniformity of use.

There are fifty examples of the *behold* group. It has ceased, of course, to have its literal sense and has come to mean "pay attention!" Sometimes it does mean "look" in the literal sense, but even then the "pay attention" element is there. The general sense, which has lost the specific, is already exemplified at verse 3: "For behold, thus saith the Lord." Here, *behold* almost means "listen!"

That said, *but behold* can look after itself except, it being so frequent, we ask why it is not evenly distributed throughout. The first gap is from verses 8 to 14. This tight piece of narrative is introduced by *behold* at the beginning

of verse 8, but there is no reason to disrupt this packed collection of acts and instructions. The gap between 46 and 48 looks long only because the verses are long. This is not really a gap. At verses 54–61, the Lord is well into his strong speech of prophecy and act, and does not need to nudge his audience. From 63 to 74, again, the pace of action has increased to height and breadth, and interest is too great for the need of a *behold*.

The expression “Lord of the vineyard” does not appear until verse 8. It is led up to interestingly by first of all verse 3: “A tame olive tree, which a man took and nourished in his vineyard”; in the very next verse he has become the “master of the vineyard” (4). That is repeated in verse 7, and finally the step is taken to, “And behold, saith the Lord of the vineyard” (8). This is because we have here the narrative dialogue, and the two members of the dialogue have to be definitely identified: the Lord of the vineyard and the servant. But the two steps to the full *Lord* show the stratified symbolism of the whole parable. Between 41 and 49, this identification is not needed, because the Lord is giving his pathetic speech.

Then follows a passage of dialogue between the Lord and the servant (this accounts for the examples in 49 and 50). There is a pause in the Lord’s speech at 55–57 and that accounts for the use in verse 57. From then on until verse 69 the Lord continues in one swath. After this great speech comes a section of narrative that continues until verse 75; this accounts for the use of the title in 70, 71, 72 (twice), and 74 (twice); thereafter to the end it is not needed, because that is the final speech of the Lord. The point therefore is that the expression is used when identification is needed in narrative and dialogue; and when the Lord is speaking at length, it is not needed, because he is speaking.

There is a similar explanation of the use of the word *servant*. There are twenty-four uses of the word *servant*, of which eighteen are by the Lord to the servant and six by the servant to the Lord. All of them occur by verse 57; and of these, nineteen are in part 1, the major narrative dialogue part. There is a final isolated couple of examples in verse 70, when the Lord sends his servant to fetch other servants. This is prepared for in verse 61: "Go to, and call servants," although not implemented until verse 70. Then there are three other references to *servants* in 71, 72, and 75, which is the missionary period.

There are twelve examples of the word *labor*, in four groups: 15–16, 29 and 32, 61–62, and 71–75. Our example of *labor* is almost an example of local use, except that there are four "local" uses here; and it brings to mind that when there is repetition it is frequently, in the Book of Mormon, of this kind. That is to say, a particular expression is used for two or three verses, and then disused. The use of *labor* in this way is characteristic.

Group I:

And it came to pass that a long time passed away, and the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto his servant, Come, let us go down into the vineyard, that we may labor in the vineyard.

And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard, and also the servant, went down into the vineyard to labor (15–16).

Group II:

The Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto his servant, Come, let us go down into the vineyard, that we may labor again in the vineyard (29).

It profiteth me nothing, notwithstanding all our labor (32).

Group III:

Wherefore, go to, and call servants, that we may labor diligently with our mights in the vineyard. . . . Wherefore, let us go to, and labor with our mights, this last time (61–62).

Group IV:

And the Lord of the vineyard saith unto them, Go to, and labor in the vineyard, with your mights . . . and if ye labor with your mights with me, ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up. . . . And it came to pass that the servants did go to it, and labor with their mights; and the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them (71–72).

And thus they labored, with all diligence. . . . ye have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard (74–75).

Local Distribution

It follows that after these examples we should turn to what I have called local use. When we come to this point in our investigation into repetition, variation, increment, general, and local, we realize that there are musical analogs to this kind of use. For example, in a symphonic movement there are two major themes, there is the working up and repetition of those themes and their interrelation, and at the same time there are episodes, which have local significance. I refer back to what I said earlier about “construction” and “flowing.” With the rhetorician, as with the composer, what may occur to him may require work, or it may just flow. There are points at which one gets knotted up and there are others in which one feels free. When we are dealing with inspired writing, we may expect the flow to be normal. There will be points at which there is pause and reflection. Inspiration may sometimes be dictation, but at other times it consists of impulse.

The outstanding example of a local phrase is “What could I have done more for my vineyard?” which occurs at 41 and 49. But in between these examples, at 47, in the form of “What could I have done more *in* my vineyard?” is another example of variation of a simple kind. The first example is at the beginning of the Lord’s pathetic speech (41); the second example, with variation, is at the end of that speech. It seems to me that *in* instead of *for* brings us closer to the work, to remind us that the Lord actually worked in the vineyard himself, he did not simply arrange for things to happen in it.

I am inclined to think that the beginning and end of his moving speech are rhetorical questions. But I think that the question at 49 is directed to the servant and is asking for an answer. The servant does not directly answer the question but simply says, “Spare it a little longer” (50); and that gives the Lord the opportunity of saying yes, he will do that (51).

The word *corrupt* occurs eight times; six between 39 and 48 and the other two at the end of 75. It supplements and complements *bad*, which occurs first of all at 32 and then from 65 to 69, and finally from 74 to 77. At 75 it comes together with *corrupt* in the same verse. *Corrupt* clearly is a local use.

The two occurrences of the word *corrupt* in 39 prepare for the Lord’s pathetic speech: “It came to pass that they beheld that the fruit of the natural branches had become corrupt also . . . and they had all become corrupt.” The next four examples are all in the Lord’s pathetic speech:

I knew that all the fruit of the vineyard, save it were these, had become corrupted. And now, these which have once brought forth good fruit, have also become corrupted (42).

Notwithstanding all the care which we have taken of my vineyard, the trees thereof hath become corrupted, that they bring forth no good fruit (46).

Who is it that hath corrupted my vineyard? (47).

The question receives no reply, but the servant in the next verse picks up the word *corrupt* and says:

Behold, I say, Is not this the cause that the trees of thy vineyard hath become corrupted? (48).

He provides a natural explanation, but I doubt whether the Lord's question, "Who is it that hath corrupted my vineyard?" is satisfied with that explanation. Satan appears to play no part in this parable. The word is first used in Job; the only prophet to use the word is Zechariah.

Corrupt is a description and a judgment; *bad* is only a judgment. Therefore the word *corrupt* is stronger than the word *bad*. The two come together in verse 75: "The Lord of the vineyard saw that his fruit was good, and that his vineyard was no more *corrupt* . . . ; my vineyard is no more *corrupted*, and the *bad* is cast away."

Here are some simpler examples of local use.

Overcome: there are seven examples stretching from 37 to 50 with one towards the end at 66:

The wild branches have *overcome* the roots thereof (37).

The wild fruit of the last, had *overcome* that part of the tree which brought forth good fruit (40).

They [the bad branches] have *overcome* the good branch, that it hath withered away. (45)

Hath not the branches thereof *overcome* the roots, which are good? And because that the branches have *overcome* the roots thereof? (48; this is the servant again picking up the word that his master has used).

The last two examples are six verses apart, but they do interconnect:

That the good may *overcome* the evil . . . until the good shall *overcome* the bad (59, 66).

Spot: there are two separate, brief uses of this word; 21–25 and 43–44:

Group I:

It was the poorest *spot* in all the land of thy vineyard. And the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto him, Counsel me not: I knew that it was a poor *spot* of ground. . . . the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto his servant . . . thou knowest that this *spot* of ground was poorer than the first. . . . Look hither, and behold the last: behold, this have I planted in a good *spot* of ground.

This is almost an altercation.

Group II:

I did plant in a good *spot* of ground. . . . I also cut down that which cumbered this *spot* of ground.

The word is not needed elsewhere in the parable.

Bitter: this word occurs three times between verses 52 and 65:

Let us pluck from the tree, those branches whose fruit is most *bitter* (52).

Pluck not the wild branches from the trees, save it be those which are most *bitter* (57).

Ye shall clear away the branches which bring forth *bitter* fruit (65).

Words in the First Half of the Parable

The most obvious phrase is *the Lord of the vineyard*; the main use is “*the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto his servant*” (15–18); “*the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto him*” (22); “*the*

Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto his servant" (23); "*the Lord of the vineyard sayeth again unto his servant*" (24); "*the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto the servant*" (26); "*the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto his servant*" (29); "*the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto the servant*" (33); "*the Lord of the vineyard sayeth unto his servant*" (35); "*the Lord of the vineyard wept, and sayeth unto the servant*" (41; this is the beginning of the pathetic speech). There are only two separate examples in part two: verses 45 and 57. The repetition of this phrase reflects the confidant function of the servant.

Go/went down occurs only in the first half: "Come, let us *go down* into the vineyard" (15); "The Lord of the vineyard, and also the servant, *went down* into the vineyard to labor" (16); "The Lord of the vineyard, and the servant, *went down* into the vineyard" (30); "They *went down* into the nethermost parts of the vineyard" (39).

In the second half, the Lord is not so concerned with visiting the vineyard. It is to be remembered that the time span in the first half of this parable is much longer than that of the second half.

The *tame olive tree* is mentioned only in the first half. There are eight examples: "I will liken thee, O House of Israel, like unto a *tame olive tree*" (3; that is the beginning of the scheme of symbolism); "His *olive tree* began to decay"(4)—already. "It grieveth me that I should lose this *tree*" (7). In verse 9 the wild olive tree is introduced—it is confined to one tree at this stage; "grafted in the branches of the *wild olive tree*" (10); "the natural branches of the *tame olive tree*" (14); "the branches of the *wild olive tree* . . . have nourished the roots, that they are alive" (34); "They have become like unto the wild olive tree; and they are of no worth" (46). This change is characteristic of the specificity of part one as opposed to the broader picture of part two.

Words in the Second Half of the Parable

The word *bad* occurs in verse 32, but the rest of its eleven examples are in the second part. We have already dealt with its interrelation with *corrupt*. The example in 32 is with *fruit* as opposed to *good fruit*:

Ye shall not clear away the *bad* thereof, all at once, lest the roots thereof should be too strong for the graft (65).

Ye shall clear away the *bad*, according as the good shall grow, that the root and the top may be equal in strength, until the good shall overcome the *bad*, and the *bad* be hewn down . . . thus will I sweep away the *bad* out of my vineyard (66).

And the *bad* shall be cast away; yea, even out of all the land of my vineyard (69).

And thus they labored . . . even until the *bad* had been cast away out of the vineyard (74).

The *bad* is cast away (75).

Then will I cause the good and the *bad* to be gathered . . . and the *bad* will I cast away into its own place (77).

All through the second part, *bad* occurs with the definite article—it has become an entity in its own right.

Initial Group of Words and Phrases

We come now to a group that is well defined, small, but characteristic. That is the *initial* group of words and phrases. Strictly speaking, the parable begins at verse 2, verse 1 being introductory. The word *prophet* occurs here as “a Prophet of the Lord” (a fixed form), and it is used in the introductory verse as *the Prophet Zenos*. That name occurs in the introductory verse of chapter 6 in a reference back to the parable in chapter 5. The prophet does not refer to himself within the parable.

The pleonastic pair “Hearken . . . and hear” (2) occurs

once more in the Book of Mormon in 1 Nephi 20:1: "Hearken and hear this, O House of Jacob." The phrase sets the beginning of the parable in high register (formal language).

References to the house of Israel occur early on: "O ye House of Israel" (2); "O house of Israel" (3); and "the house of Israel" (1). It is not surprising that this phrase does not recur in the parable, for it is replaced by the tree: "I will liken thee, O house of Israel, like unto a tame olive tree" (3).

A man (3) occurs frequently in scripture, but not again in the parable. The phrase is replaced by *Master of the Vineyard* (4–7). At verse 8, *Lord of the vineyard* replaces *master of the vineyard* and is used thenceforward. The *man* is not discarded, but is embodied in *Master of the Vineyard*, and he is embodied in *Lord of the Vineyard*. This is significant for the symbolic interrelation.

Decay: "A tame olive tree . . . it grew, and waxed old, and began to *decay*" (3); "He saw that his olive tree began to *decay*" (4). This announces the beginning of the action in the parable, the process of decay. I find no other example in the parable and no replacement until we find the word *corrupt* at verse 39.

Main: "The *main* top thereof began to perish" (6) and "We will pluck off those *main* branches which are beginning to wither away" (7). I found no other example of *main* in the parable and no apparent replacement. *Top* is not a concept that is repeated until verse 66: "The root and the *top* may be equal" (the key to the solution), and that phrase is again repeated at 73: "The root and the *top*." *Main* does not occur in this phrase nor in any phrase referring to branches; nor does it occur in the Bible. *Main top* may have been known to Joseph Smith as a nautical term—of the topsail sometimes set above the mainsail.

Tame: "A *tame* olive tree" (3); "The natural branches of a *tame* olive tree" (14); "*Tame* fruit" (18). *Tame* is replaced by *natural*, which occurs with it at 14 above. *Tame* is contrasted with *wild*, which is used first at 17: "*Wild* olive branches"; and continues to be used, although *tame* is discarded.

Words in the Final Section

I found one *final* word—one that occurs only in the last part of the parable—of interest and importance, and that is *equal*. It is first used at 66: "Ye shall clear away the bad, according as the good shall grow, that the root and the top may be *equal* in strength." Then at 73: "And there began to be the natural fruit again in the vineyard; and the natural branches began to grow and thrive exceedingly; and the wild branches began to be plucked off, and to be cast away; and they did keep the root and the top thereof, *equal*, according to the strength thereof."

This is the solution of the olive-yard problem. It is not the task of this paper to go into the symbolism, but it may be worth pointing out that the roots, the trunk, and the branches of a tree are contemporaneous—one does not come before another. From the beginning, a plant shoots down and up from the seed.

Initial and Final

Few words of interest are present at the beginning and at the end and not in between. On *top* (6, 66, 73), see the previous discussion.

The principal word of interest is *time* in various combinations. In verse 29 we have "the *time* draweth near, and the end soon cometh." It is difficult to realize that most of the time covered by the parable has already elapsed by this point. At verse 71 we have "fruit which I shall lay up unto

myself, against the *time* which will soon come." And in the very last verse of the parable we still have "and when the *time* cometh that evil fruit shall again come into my vineyard." One *time* has come in verse 75, but there is still another *time* and another *time* after that.

There are two phrases with *time* that complement one another: *the last time*, and *a long time*. The phrase *a long time* is used mainly up to verse 31 to remind us of the age covered by the first part of the parable: "*A long time* had passed away" (15); "*This long time* have I nourished it" (20); "I have nourished it *this long time*" (22; this is repeated in verse 23 and 25). At 29 we are again told in the narrative that *a long time* had passed away. That is succeeded by another combination with *nourished* at 31: "*This long time* have we nourished this tree." There is one example only of this phrase at the end of the parable, this time looking to the future: "*For a long time* will I lay up the fruit of my vineyard" (76); repeated again at the end of the verse. The complementary expression "*the last time*" does not begin (as we may expect) until 62: "Let us go to, and labor with our mights, *this last time*, . . . this is for the *last time* that I shall prune my vineyard"; then "That all may be nourished once again for the *last time*" (63); "Dung them once more, for the *last time*: for the end draweth nigh" (64; that was the expression already used at verse 29); "This is the *last time* that I shall nourish my vineyard: for the end is nigh at hand" (71 again); "For *this last time* have we nourished my vineyard" (75); "For the *last time* have I nourished my vineyard" (76, repeated again). The insistence on the length of time in the first half of the parable is complemented by the insistence on the little time left in the second half.

The expression *lay up* is used seven times up to verse 31. It is used once at 46 and three times between 71 and 76:

I may *lay up* fruit thereof, against the season, unto myself (13).

I shall *lay up* much fruit, which the tree thereof hath brought forth; and the fruit thereof I shall *lay up*, against the season, unto mine own self (18).

That I may *lay up* of the fruit thereof, against the season, unto mine own self (19).

Take of the fruit thereof, and lay it up, against the season, that I may preserve it unto mine own self (20).

I must *lay up* fruit, against the season, unto mine own self (29).

And I have *laid up* unto myself against the season, much fruit (31).

The isolated example is in the pathetic speech:

These I had hope to preserve, to have *laid up* fruit thereof, against the season, unto mine own self (46).

Last, at the end of the parable:

Ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall *lay up* unto myself, against the time which will soon come (71).

Wherefore I will *lay up* unto mine own self of the fruit, for a long time (76).

This example of *lay up* is a good one of variation and accretion. There is just enough variation to keep it alive and prevent it from becoming mechanical.

A term of similar meaning is *gather*, which occurs only twice, in verses 23 and 77, towards the beginning and at the end. At 23 it occurs together with *lay up*: "It hath brought forth much fruit; therefore, *gather* it, and *lay it up*, against the season, that I may preserve it unto mine own self"; and "Then will I cause the good and the bad to be *gathered*" (77).

In considering these combinations of repetition, variation, and distribution, I have only begun to exemplify the extraordinary way in which phrases are combined and

accrete in this parable. The rhetorical buildup is complex and rich. There is no passage like this in the Bible. Our parable is a good example of what I mean when I say that the rhetoric of the Book of Mormon is richer than that of the Bible. This parable, with all its repetition of varying kinds, approaches more closely the condition of music than any other piece of prose that I know. An extraordinary dancing energy runs through it.

In contrast with all these repetitions, I will mention the words and phrases that occur only once in this parable and sometimes only once in the whole Book of Mormon.

Loftiness: this occurs only once, and only once more in the Book of Mormon: "Is it not the *loftiness* of thy vineyard? Hath not the branches thereof overcame the roots, which are good?" (48). The other example helps us to understand this one: "The *loftiness* of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low" (2 Nephi 12:17, quoting Isaiah 2:17). Here the association is with pride. It is interesting that the Lord apparently ignores this input of the servant.

Glory: "I may yet have *glory* in the fruit of my vineyard" (54). Similarly unique and with a similar sense in this parable is *rejoice exceedingly*: "And perhaps that I may *rejoice exceedingly*, that I have preserved the roots and the branches of the first fruit" (60). There is not much rejoicing or glory in this parable; there is hard work, real experience, and a satisfactory end.

At verse 66, which is a strong one, we have the most powerful verb in the parable, *sweep*: "And thus will I *sweep* away the bad out of my vineyard." Compare 2 Nephi 24:23 (quoting Isaiah 14:23): "I will *sweep* it with the besom of destruction"; but a context that intimates the strength of the

phrase better is at Ether 14:18: "He *sweepeth* the earth before him."

Two expressions occur several times in Jacob 5 but nowhere else in the Book of Mormon. One phrase is *cumber the ground*, which appears at 9, 49, and 66; and at 30: "All sorts of fruit did *cumber the tree*"; and at 44: "Also cut down that which *cumbered this spot*."

The other phrase is *nethermost parts*, which occurs at 13, 14, 19, 38, 39, and 52, but nowhere else in the Book of Mormon.

One last example, the most important, of this unique use of words, is the word *wept*: "And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard *wept*" (41). The Manhood and the Godhood of the Lord of the vineyard come together here. Enoch saw the Lord *weeping* (Moses 7:28) and "Jesus *wept*" (John 11:35).

It will be realized that this account is selective and far from complete. But it may point the way to a more thorough analysis of this chapter as of other parts of the Book of Mormon. It needs to be combined with observations on syntax, lexis, sound, stress, and much else.

But enough has been said, I think, to illustrate how packed and rich the Book of Mormon is. It is a quality that cannot be properly appreciated unless the book is read aloud and listened to. We no longer in our culture read slowly, accurately, or aloud to the soul; we skim. We do little repeated reading. We do not read for an experience, let alone for understanding, so much as to read for immediate "comprehension." If we read aloud, and even more likely if we hear something read aloud, we take it as an experience. If we do analyze, and we must analyze, it must be to have a better whole from the parts after we have completed the analysis. Analysis has no value in itself. It has value insofar

as it contributes toward the soul's being able to experience and understand the whole better in the end.

We do not know how far the Bible has suffered historically, but we do know that it has had much opportunity to be changed and that it has suffered most in our century with being ignored, and from the more and more vulgar variants of it which are being used. However, I do not say that the New English Bible is vulgar; it is merely dull. But even dullness is a relief from vulgarity. In the Book of Mormon we have been given a text that was translated from plates. That text was preserved on those plates, all through the time that the Bible was subject to alteration. That is why in the Book of Mormon we have a unique gift. We are closer to the times it speaks of than we are in any other scripture. The Book of Mormon is a test of the Bible's accuracy.

We need to learn ourselves and to teach our children the delight of this gift of the Book of Mormon. We can do that by reading it aloud to them, to teach them to read the scriptures aloud to themselves, and to maintain the tradition of reading aloud in the family, so that we shall not lose the power of experiencing and understanding the Book of Mormon and through the Book of Mormon, the Bible. Our children need to be exposed to the language of the scriptures at the time they learn their own language, so that they can incorporate the scriptural dialect into their familiarity. Exposure to the Book of Mormon can lead first to experience and afterwards to understanding through experience.

To sit down and meditate the rhetoric of the Book of Mormon is to learn the rhetorical truth of the Book of Mormon, a truth that is all-embracing. Rhetoric does not encapsulate and communicate messages; like music, it is an art. To experience language is more than to abstract mes-

sages from it. Rhetoric is not an added decoration; it is the thing itself.

Notes

1. See “wild grapes” (Isaiah 5:2); “What could have been done more in my vineyard?” (verse 4); “pruned” and “digged” (verse 6); “for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel” (verse 7). Compare also Paul’s “root” and “branches”; “wild olive tree”; “grafted”; and “wild by nature” (Romans 11:16–24).

2. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 364. See also Joseph Smith, Jr., *The History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B. H. Roberts, ed., 2d rev. ed., 7 vols (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 6:364, and Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980), 366, 402.

3. The chapters in the 1830 version are, on the whole, longer. Note that chapter 3 of the 1830 edition begins with, “Now behold, it came to pass” where “behold” and “it came to pass” are put together as a kind of extra indication of attention. In our modern version, the beginning of old chapter 3 corresponds with the beginning of chapter 4.

4. Of the opposition between *good* and *bad*, *bad* is dealt with under “Words of the Second Half of the Parable.”