



Show Notes & Transcripts

Podcast General Description:

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Wednesday.

Podcast Episode Descriptions:

Part 1:

Ever wondered how we, as Latter-day Saints can effectively gather Israel amidst the enormity of the task? Join Dr. Matthew Bowen as he delves into Jacob 5, uncovering the role of Jesus Christ in His work and His unwavering love for all His children, across generations. Discover how He orchestrates the gathering process and collaborates with His servants.

Part 2:

Dr. Matthew Bowen further explores Jacob's warning against denying Jesus Christ, intertwining the narrative of Sherem and reflecting on the ephemeral nature of life.

Timecodes:

Part 1

- 00:00 Part 1–Dr. Matthew Bowen
- 00:42 What to expect in this episode
- 01:15 Introduction of Dr. Bowen
- 02:13 Bio of Dr. Bowen
- 03:01 Isles of the Sea and working on our portion of the Vineyard
- 04:48 Preparing to read the allegory
- 07:51 Everyone will receive the Atonement
- 10:55 Jacob 5:15 - A temple metaphor and the Divine Council
- 13:46 Jacob’s life story and “Let God Prevail”
- 19:12 Jacob 5:3 and Isaiah 5 - Beginning of decay
- 21:55 Jacob 5:6-7 - First branches move out and wild ones brought in
- 24:25 Jacob 5:8-10 - Grafted branches and servants
- 27:23 Paul Hoskisson splits it into seven time periods
- 28:48 Jacob 5:15-28 - Day of Former Day Saints and ways to divide the allegory
- 31:54 Jacob 1:1-14 - Nurturing and first scattering
- 34:14 Hank summarizes history of Israel after the Exodus
- 36:08 Israel demands a king
- 39:52 Main takeaways from Jacob 5:1-14
- 43:10 Dr. Bowen on Exodus 14-17
- 46:10 Elder Holland on the allegory
- 48:35 Hugh B Brown “God is the Gardener”
- 52:50 President Benson: Turning our lives over to God
- 56:34 Jacob 5:15-28 - Gentile grafts produce good fruit
- 59:55 Jacob 5:58-63, 67-73 - Joy in the vineyard
- 1:04:57 Dr. Bowen shares a story about his mission
- 1:06:53 End of Part 1 – Dr. Matthew Bowen

Part 2

- 00:00 Part II–Dr. Matthew Bowen
- 00:07 Jacob 5:15-28 - Time of Christ and a “poor spot”
- 03:35 “Let God Prevail” and BH Roberts
- 05:03 Jacob 5:49-51 - A low spot
- 07:19 How does the Lord save the unsavable?
- 10:19 Jacob 5:71 - Call for help
- 12:09 Gideon and his 300
- 13:07 Jacob 5:68-74 - Zion and the Lord knows you
- 15:38 Jacob 5:72-74 Hank’s next missionary plaque scripture
- 16:51 2 Kings 6 - Elisha and the young man

- 17:35 Jacob 5:75-77 - Glorious conclusion
- 21:26 Isaiah 11:11 - Isles of the sea
- 22:54 3 Nephi, Psalm 95 - Cleave unto God
- 24:21 Jacob 6:12-13 - Be wise and temple allusions
- 25:14 Jacob 7 - Jacob had to add one more story and various writers
- 27:38 Jacob 7 - Sherem and Dr. Bowen shares a story about confrontation
- 29:58 Jacob 7:7-9 - Jacob explains why Sherem is wrong
- 30:25 Where did Sherem come from?
- 30:54 Jacob 7:5 - *Unshaken*
- 32:08 Jacob 7:17-23 - After Sherem dies and Jacob sums up
- 34:05 Jacob 7:23 - The threat of Sherem's denying Christ and love of God restored
- 36:03 *The Come Back Podcast* - Ashly Stone and Lauren Rose
- 36:49 Jacob 7:50 Life passes as a dream
- 40:06 Jacob 7:27 - Adieu - Go with God
- 40:56 Dr. Bowen shares his testimony of Jesus Christ and the Book of Mormon
- 43:35 End of Part II– Dr. Matthew Bowen

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Trees are People!

GUEST: MATTHEW L. BOWEN



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|--------------------|----------|---|
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:04 | Hello, my friends. Welcome to another episode of FollowHIM. My name's Hank Smith and I'm your host, and I'm here with my tame co-host, John Bytheway, and Dr. Matt Bowen. John, we are in Jacob 5, 6, and 7. What are you looking forward to? |
| John Bytheway: | 00:00:19 | I think a lot of people, they understand Jacob 5 as a vineyard, but they don't know what to do with it. And all of us go, this is a long chapter, why is this in here? |
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:30 | I love this chapter, John. I didn't as a kid, I'll tell you. I remember when my parents would say, "Hey, we're going to read five verses each," and I thought, I'm never going to go to school. |
| John Bytheway: | 00:00:40 | Three days later. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:00:44 | Like I said, John, we're here with Dr. Matt Bowen. He's out in the Religion Department at BYU Hawaii. Matt, what are we looking forward to today, Jacob 5, 6 and 7. |
| Dr. Matthew Bowen: | 00:00:54 | So what we have in Jacob 5 is an extended parable about the atonement of Jesus Christ and its effects on the human family and how that atonement relates to the gathering of Israel in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. And then Jacob will tie it up. I think he intended to conclude his record in chapter 6. He ties it up with some references to the Psalms and to Isaiah in chapter 6. And then in chapter 7, perhaps as an unintended coda to the book of his encounter with Sherem and the impact that had on him and his people. That helps us appreciate some other things that happen later in the Book of Mormon where we have other individuals who come using specious logic and rhetoric in an attempt to get people off of the covenant path. Lots of good stuff in these chapters. |
| Hank Smith: | 00:01:51 | Our first antichrist figure in Sherem. I'm reminded of what Elder Holland once wrote. He said, "This allegory is a declaration of divine love." John, we haven't had Matt on the podcast in a |

couple of years. We were way back in the Book of Exodus. Did such an incredible job. Why don't you introduce him to us?

- John Bytheway: 00:02:13 Yes, we're glad to have him back. This is Dr. Matthew L. Bowen. He's an Associate Professor of Religious Education at BYU Hawaii. He received a Master's Degree and PhD in Biblical Studies from Catholic University of America. He is married, has three children, and the temperature where he is, is about twice as high as it is where I am and where Hank is right now. But we're really glad to have you. We're a little jealous, but we're glad to have you back.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:02:41 Thank you. Great to be back. Sometimes I'm isolated from some of my friends and colleagues over there, but love my friends in Ohana and the students here and I feel like it's a real privilege to be where I'm at and doing what I'm doing and it's a privilege to be here with you guys on this podcast.
- John Bytheway: 00:03:00 Thank you.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:01 Matt, is this the section where Jacob says, "We are upon the isles of the sea"? Is that here or is that in Second Nephi?
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:03:09 It's in Second Nephi 10 where he talks about that. One of the texts that's going to come up in Jacob 6 is a text that he quoted in that sermon that Nephi commissioned him to give to the people. When we get to Jacob 6:2, we'll need to talk about Isaiah 11:11 because I think it has some special application actually to where I'm at at BYU Hawaii and what's going on here and the work that is expected of us over here in particular at this school.
- Hank Smith: 00:03:41 I think that's something that will interest our listeners. What's it like out there at BYU Hawaii? Now, Matt, before we turn it over to you, let me read a portion of the Come, Follow Me manual. "There are many, many people who haven't yet heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you ever feel overwhelmed by the immensity of the task of gathering them into the Lord's Church, what Jacob said about olive trees in Jacob 5 has a reassuring reminder, the vineyard belongs to the Lord. He has given each of us a small area to assist his work, our family, our circle of friends, our sphere of influence, and sometimes the first person we help to gather is ourselves.
- 00:04:18 "But we are never alone in this work for the Lord of the Vineyard labors alongside his servants. God knows and loves his children and he will prepare a way for each of them to hear the

Gospel, even those who have rejected him in the past. And then when the work is done, all those who have been diligent in laboring with him shall have joy with him because of the fruit of his vineyard." A beautiful opening paragraph to a beautiful section of scripture. With that, Matt, where do we want to start?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:04:48

I think we may want to start at the framing of the allegory just at the very end of chapter four, and we don't need to spend a ton of time here, but it is interesting to me that he leads in with, he talks about the hardheartedness of the Lord's people, despising the words of plainness. One of the reasons Isaiah was commissioned to give the people a difficult message back in Isaiah 6 you'll remember is the Lord wanted to make the message difficult for those who were hardening their hearts. Zenos's allegory may actually be another example of this, where you have the message somewhat encoded because the Lord wants people who are open to his spirit and learning through his spirit to be able to get the symbols and the meaning. It's like Jesus's parables, there are a lot of layers here.

00:05:51

But he starts off by blending quotations from Isaiah 8:14-16, from Isaiah 28:16, and from the Hallel, Psalm 118:22 with this image of the stone, the rejection of the foundation stone upon which the Lord's people can have safe foundation, and how even after the rejection of that stone it can become the great and the last and the only sure foundation upon which they can build. Then he asks this question, "And now my beloved, how is it possible that these, after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it that it may become the head of their corner?" Again, that's quoting from Psalm 118:22. The Psalms, remember, they're the hymns of the temple, the hymns of the Jerusalem temple. It's really significant that we're getting Isaiah together with the Psalms here.

00:06:54

And then he says, "Behold my beloved brethren, I will unfold this mystery unto you, if I do not by any means get shaken from my firmness in the spirit and stumble because of my anxiety for you." Great Jacob word there, anxiety. A lot of people have talked about that. But that word mystery should be a real signal to all of us that what's coming next is symbolic and sacred. It's going to be something like what we get in the temple endowment where you have a narrative that's told in a very symbolic way with many layers of meaning. The narrative in the endowment helps us see this too, how it all works out in the end. Elder Bruce and Sister Marie Hafen have talked about how the endowments, the story of experiencing the fall, but then

receiving the atonement, receiving the blessings of the atonement.

00:07:51 One of the things I love about the allegory of the olive tree, it's a story about how the entirety of the Lord's vineyard, including his own people, the natural tree and the actual branches of the tree ultimately receive that atonement. I wanted to mention that word mystery again. Jacob 4:18, that word, "I will unfold this mystery unto you." The word mystery, whether you connect it with Greek *mysterion* or *mysteria*, the plural, mysteries, or the Hebrew *sod*, we're talking about confidential teaching into which one needs to be inducted. That's what Jacob's trying to do. He is going to induct us into that and then he leads in chapter 5 verse one, "Behold my beloved brethren, do you not remember to have read the words of the prophet Zenos, which he spake unto the house of Israel saying, 'Hearken ye O House of Israel and hear the words of me, a prophet of the Lord.'" That's a very typical type of formulaic proclamation that Hebrew prophets use. Isaiah, we see him use that a lot.

00:08:59 And then he says, "For thus saith the Lord I will liken thee." That is probably the Hebrew verb *mashal*, I'm going to liken thee, O, House of Israel, unto a tame olive tree." He's going to make a parable about the House of Israel that compares the House of Israel to a tame olive tree, which a man took and nourished in his vineyard and it grew and waxed old and began to decay. So this parable is about the House of Israel, and I think in these first three verses, this is the only place where we get any names. This helps us map where this whole thing's going to go.

John Bytheway: 00:09:37 I really appreciate this introduction. I like to think of this as Jacob chapter 5 is the A of a Q&A, and the Q is Jacob 4:17. Here's the question, how's it possible the Jews, after rejecting the sure foundation, will ever build upon it so it'll become the head of their corner and then, as Matt just said, okay, we'll hearken to the words of Zenos. He's going to answer that question. It's a long answer. It's not Jeopardy. It's a long answer here, but here's how the Jews will eventually be able to build on Christ the Messiah. I've often wondered, did Zenos know about this good spot across the oceans? It's fascinating to think about, what did Zenos see in a vision so that he could put this allegory together? That helps me to go, okay, this is the answer to the question in Jacob 4:17, so thanks for starting there.

Hank Smith: 00:10:28 Yeah, Matt, Jacob 5 is the heading interfering here?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:10:33 I'd have to look at the 1830 edition to see where the original chapter break is, but a lot of these chapters in the Book of

Mormon, the way that it's in the present text, Orson Pratt arranged them differently than they were in earlier editions.

Hank Smith: 00:10:47 And they have a tendency to wipe the slate clean after you finish a chapter and start a new one. Where this one is a direct connection.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:10:55 Yep. And we probably shouldn't let it pass that you remember, he's talking about the savior becoming the head of the corner. That's a temple metaphor, a temple building metaphor. The Lord's people are going to be built into a perfect temple, and that's the idea with Christ as the head of the corner. This whole thing invites us to read it in terms of the temple. I did an article years ago where I talked about all of Jacob 5 as a temple text, so I hope we can talk about some of the temple aspects of this whole text. It works in many ways like the endowment does for us in the temple. We'll see divine council language like, "Come, let us go down," like in verse 15, for example, where we have members of the divine council working together like we find elsewhere.

John Bytheway: 00:11:49 It might be good to remind everybody, who is this Zenos? Okay, he was on the plates of brass. He was an Old Testament era prophet that doesn't appear in our current King James Old Testament. Somehow Jacob had access to this allegory of Zenos. Am I saying that right?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:12:09 Yeah. In fact, Dole Reynolds did a study years ago where he identified places where Lehi starts to refer to Zenos I think in chapter 10, some other places in Nephi too. Chapter 19, for example, there are several references to Zenos there, but there are allusions to this allegory that show up in the Book of Mormon. Even before we get here.

John Bytheway: 00:12:32 Maybe it was on their minds or in their reservoir of gospel knowledge.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:12:36 And for some reason Jacob feels very motivated when he reaches this point in his personal record to give it all to us, and I'm really grateful that he did.

Hank Smith: 00:12:46 Yeah. I've wondered before if he reads through the small plates and says, "All right, they've referenced this enough times that the reader maybe won't know the actual source."

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:12:58 It was an inspired decision and as much as when you're doing family scripture study and everybody has to read two verses or

five verses, and as much as the kids see the length of the verses and panic, I'm just really glad. And Jacob's the one that mentions how hard it was to engrave the words on the plates. That's what he says earlier in the book. That was difficult to write it down, but he took the time to get the whole allegory on the plates and in his record. That shouldn't pass without notice.

Hank Smith: 00:13:33 Yeah. And Matt, I don't know anyone better than you at connecting Book of Mormon and Old Testament. Two years ago, he was showing us Lehi throughout the book of Exodus.

John Bytheway: 00:13:44 It was awesome.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:13:46 Maybe we should look for a little bit of Jacob here. Of course, Jacob, the son of Lehi, the brother of Nephi, he's named after the patriarch Jacob that we're familiar with from the Old Testament. The new name that Jacob there in the Old Testament that he gets in Genesis 32 is Israel. You wonder what Jacob's thinking as he is unpacking this. He says, he's quoting Zenos at this point, "Hearken, O house of Israel and hear the words of me, a prophet of the Lord." From Genesis 32 onward, the name Israel comes enormously significant within the biblical text. I see in the allegory something of either a reflection of Genesis 32. You remember it's in Genesis 32 that Jacob, the patriarch, wrestles one who is described as a man. In Hebrew, the word is *îš*. It is a synonym by the way of Jacob's son's name, Enos and both terms *îš* and Enosh, or Enos, share a common Hebrew plural, *anashim*.

00:14:56 Remember at the end of the Genesis 32, it talks about how Jacob is renamed Israel because he's either had power or struggled with God and men and prevailed. President Nelson has talked a lot lately about the significance of the name Israel, meaning let God prevail. The name Israel can mean let God contend, let God prevail. There have been commentators that think that, and I happen to be one of them that agrees with this, that it's not an etymological or what we would describe as a literal scientific etymological derivation of the name Israel. Jacob names the place Peniel because he saw God face to face and was preserved. Some commentators have pointed to the idea that the name Israel is echoing the idea of *îš*, which is man, *ra'ah*, which is has seen, and El or Elohim, God. The name Peniel then fits with his having seen God face to face.

00:16:09 But it's Jacob there in the story struggling with someone who's described as a man or even a divine man. Well, what is the parable here? "I will liken thee Israel to a tame olive tree which a man took and nourished in his vineyard." Well, what's this

tree, this tame olive tree within the vineyard going to do? It's going to struggle with, in fact wrestle with, the owner of the vineyard, with the Lord of the vineyard. But what's going to happen at the end of this? Jacob walks out of that experience in Genesis 32 with a new name and a blessing that's only realized in stages. In fact, he'll, even after going to Bethel in Genesis 28, he'll even have to go back there again. This great blessing that he gets upon his entire family is realized in stages and I think Jacob actually in the story has to move from a point in which he is really trying to assert his own will to reaching a point where he's letting God prevail in his life.

00:17:14 The end of the allegory, this is in verse 75. You remember that The Lord says, "At the end of all of this, behold this last time have we nourished my vineyard and thou beholdest that I have done according to my will." That might sum up the entirety of the story. God, in the end, he prevails. The Lord prevails in the vineyard. His will prevails. Psalm 40, ancient Israelites would go into the temple, they would come and they would delight to do the will of God, Psalm 40:7-8. Joseph Smith later, when he was introducing the temple ordinances for the Nauvoo temple, Doctrine and Covenants 128:5, he says, "We're doing this to answer the will of God." Everything that's happening in this allegory is about how God will prevail, how his will, will be done. Remember the Savior's instruction to his disciples to pray that the father's will would be done on earth even as it is in heaven.

00:18:16 I think that is an idea that we need to understand as being closely associated with the purpose and the function of the temple. C.S. Lewis used to talk about bridgeheads, that the world had been the province of the adversary in a lot of ways and that we established bridgehead. That was the idea of Aslan. Aslan moving, Christ is on the move, and eventually things are going to work out and the world is going to be what it was intended to be, that it will fill the measure of its creation. What is supposed to happen here will ultimately happen. One of the reasons I love this text so much is we can see it on the individual level or as the individuation of people's personal stories, but also collectively what the Lord is doing with large groups of people. It's incredible.

Hank Smith: 00:19:12 Matt, right out of the Come Follow Me manual, it says, "Jacob 5 is a story with symbolic meaning." This is what you've been telling us. "It describes trees and fruits and laborers, but it's really about God's interactions with his people throughout history. So as you read the basic story, think about what some of the things in the story might symbolize." So as we walk through, Matt, should we just get the story and then talk about

the symbol and then read the story and talk about the principle? Would that work?

- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:19:39 Let's do it.
- Hank Smith: 00:19:40 Where do you want to start? Verse three?
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:19:42 Yeah. We might as well start with verse three, "For behold, thus saith the Lord, I will liken thee, O House of Israel, to a tame olive tree." It begins with a tree that's doing what it should do. A lot of students when we talk about Isaiah 5 in my Isaiah class, is they see the intertextual connections between Isaiah 5 and the vineyard there.
- Hank Smith: 00:20:05 Remind us what's in Isaiah 5, Matt.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:20:07 It's that parable of the vineyard where you have the grapes. The Lord's looking forward to the vineyard bringing forth grapes and instead it brings forth wild grapes. It's not producing what it's supposed to be producing, what it was designed to produce. So it starts out with the tree, the tame olive tree. It has been doing that up to this point, so he took and nourished it in his vineyard and it grew and waxed old and began to decay. By the way, there are a lot of repetitions of three like this in the allegory and elsewhere. This tree is starting not to do what it was intended to do and designed do.
- Hank Smith: 00:20:49 In verse three, you mentioned began to decay. In the Spanish translation of the Book of Mormon, it means it began to dry out, and I've thought about that as the living water no longer taking that in.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:21:02 That's nice. And it came to pass that the master of the vineyard went forth and he saw that his olive tree began to decay and he said, "I will prune it and dig about it and nourish it," so there's the three, "that perhaps it may shoot forth young and tender branches that perish not." There's some debate about what the name Lehi means, whether it's jaw or cheek, Lekhi. There has something to do with, there's also a Hebrew word, lahah, which has to do with having the vitality of life in it. And I wonder if maybe Lehi's faithful family members saw maybe an allusion to themselves, because they recognized pretty quickly that they're part of this process of Israel being scattered throughout the world.
- Hank Smith: 00:21:51 He doesn't want to lose this tree. I'm going to prune it. Dig it. Nourish it.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:21:55 Yep, and he doesn't want to lose these young branches either. "It came to pass that he pruned and digged about it and nourished it," again, the three, "according to his word, and it came to pass, after many days it began to put forth somewhat little young and tender branches. But behold the main top thereof began to perish." There is a way to read this in terms of what the data that's being given here in verse 6 and then in verse 7 where we can read this as a reference to the northern kingdom of Israel. And what happens? "It came to pass that the master of the vineyard saw it and he said unto the servant, 'It grieveth me that I should lose this tree. Therefore, go and pluck the branches from a wild olive tree and bring them hither unto me and we will pluck off these main branches that are beginning to wither away and we will cast them into the fire that they may be burned.'"

00:22:44 This is the first reference to we're going to start taking branches out and we're going to start bringing wild branches in. The resettlement policy of the Assyrian Empire was, when they would conquer nations, which often involved a lot of death and destruction for existing settlements and cities, they would remove conquered people into other parts of the empire and then they would resettle peoples from other parts of the empire into the newly conquered territory. And that is what happens in the north. By 722 or 721 BC, that process had mostly been completed. Not everyone in the northern kingdom had been taken out of there. Some had fled south. Lehi's family might ultimately be descendants from those refugees that fled out of the northern kingdom around that time, around 722, 721. But you have a few people who are left in the land and a lot of new people brought into the land and that is maybe one way we can read verses 6 and 7. Those wild olive trees, that's coded language for non-Israel by nature or Gentile.

Hank Smith: 00:24:09 So Matt, the olive tree is struggling. He puts some work in and it has a little bit of growth. It's little young tender branches, but still, the top, the main portion, it hasn't worked.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:24:25 Yeah. Then he says verse eight, "And behold, saith the Lord of the vineyard." So now that's another signal that this isn't just a man. This is another prophetic formula like thus saith the Lord or saith the Lord. "Saith the Lord of the vineyard. I will take away many of these young and tender branches and I will graft them whithersoever I will." This is a echo of what we're going to get later in I think about verse 75 that I mentioned, but he is done according to his will. So he is beginning to do this. "I'm going to whatsoever I will and it mattereth not that if it so be that the root of this tree will perish that I may preserve the fruit

thereof unto myself." So he's going to keep a part of Israel alive no matter what. Whether the tree itself in the land decides to continue to not do or be what it's supposed to be, he's still going to preserve Israel somehow in the vineyard.

00:25:28 So "wherefore I will take these young and tender branches and I will graft them whithersoever I will." There it is again, and now he's giving instructions to the servant. "Take down the branches of the wild olive tree and graft them in the stead thereof and these which I have plucked off will I cast into the fire and burn them that they may not cumber the ground of my vineyard. And it came to pass the servant of the Lord of the vineyard." And I think appropriately so as prophets, who is the servant of the Lord here?

Hank Smith: 00:26:02 It depends. I don't want to be wrong, but could we take this as God the father and the Savior? Or even in this one, verse 10, could this be Peter and Cornelius? Am I off on both of those, Matt?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:26:17 It's an open question. I wonder. There's a point in Isaiah where he describes the Assyrians as the ax or the tool in his hands in doing something. The more disquieting possibility here is that the servant is this horrible nation. But I think it's ambiguous enough that maybe we'd still understand this as referring to members of the divine council who are involved in carrying out his will down in the vineyard.

Hank Smith: 00:26:47 Sometimes these gentiles are brought into, would you say, the church or into Israel? Is that what we're saying?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:26:54 They're actually put, in this case, in the land under the Assyrians. Now, we'll get to this I think a little bit later because this isn't the only time we have this interactivity between the natural tree and wild branches. Paul Hoskisson divided this whole allegory up. I don't know if you've ever seen his article on this. It's in this book right here.

Hank Smith: 00:27:20 The Allegory of the Olive Tree became a book.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:27:23 Yeah. So this was the first year I was serving as a missionary in the California Roosevelt Mission, which I'll hopefully get a chance to say something about because it relates to my whole experience with this text. Pretty early on in its existence, scholars associated with the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies put out that book, and Paul Hoskisson has a study in it where he divides this entire allegory into 7 time

periods. Beginning in verse three, we get the founding and the aging of the House of Israel. Verses four through 14, we get the nurturing and the scattering of the House of Israel, but we're coming up on the end of that. We're going to get to a little bit later verses 15 through 28.

00:28:11 The Days of the Former Day Saints, verses 29 through 49, will take us through the great apostasy, 50 through 74, the gathering of Israel, 75 and 76, the millennium. Then verse 77, the end of the world. We might be tempted to think, oh, why isn't the millennium the 7th, because we sometimes identify that with the Sabbath and rest? But it's really not until the bad is completely cleared out. Then the vineyard is burned with fire. Or Doctrine and Covenants 88, you have the celestial utilization of the earth that this whole process is really complete.

Hank Smith: 00:28:48 Matt, that makes perfect sense. So 1 through 14, verse 15 starts with, "After a long time had passed away." So you have that new storyline. And then you said 15 through?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:29:00 Yeah, so 15 through 28, this is what Dr. Hoskisson calls the Day of the Former Day Saints. It's the only time in this allegory when the Gentile grafts produced good fruit. And you have righteous and unrighteous Lehwites. And as you mentioned earlier, what did Zenos see with this good spot of ground? I've made an argument elsewhere that the name Nephi, actually this was building on work that John Gee had done, that the name Nephi is actually the Egyptian lexing Nephir, which with the final letter later on, this actually starts still during the late kingdom, the third intermediate period and onward. The normal pronunciation of that word weakens at the end to Nephi, Nefi, Nufi, and if that's true, if that's what the name Nephi means, the name Nephi means good. Or in the Faulkner's lexicon, good, goodly, fair, of fine quality. This would explain some things like why the Nephites see themselves as the fair ones.

00:30:05 You remember Mormons lament? Oh ye, fair ones. The Nephites often see themselves in terms of being good or fair. Nephi himself says, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents," which doesn't mean strictly good per se, but means of good quality. He's of parents who are of fine quality. You wonder if they start to see themselves in Zenos's allegory when they talk about the good spot of ground and that they're the part of this branch in that good spot of ground that's bearing good fruit, if they would read this and identify themselves, or see themselves in that.

Hank Smith:	00:30:45	If I'm teaching Sunday school, I could say, "All right, let me break this up into one through 14, 15 through 28, 29 through 51."
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:30:55	Yeah, 49 or 51.
Hank Smith:	00:30:56	Okay. 52 to around 74, 75, and then those last few verses as second coming millennium.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:31:08	Yeah. 75 to 76, millennium, and then 77 is the end.
Hank Smith:	00:31:13	It's nice to take a chapter like this that's so long and break it up into sections like that, that are concise that you can try to understand one. Then the next one, then the next one. I like something like that. You're eating the elephant one bite at a time.
John Bytheway:	00:31:28	There's a really beautiful chart in the manual. See this full color chart, for those of you watching, that has those divisions of the four visits and the millennium. Helpful, like you said, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:31:42	Oh, John, so I just explained something you said that was in the manual, wonderful. I love it when I reinvent the wheel.
John Bytheway:	00:31:49	When you're literally on the same page even.
Hank Smith:	00:31:54	Literally, same page. Matt, how would you summarize this first section one through 14? The Lord sees this decaying tree and he's like, "We got to move."
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:32:04	Yeah, so we've had the nurturing and scattering of Israel in his first attempt, as you mentioned, to save the tree. The Lord's going to attempt by prophets, and you could read in here maybe Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Isaiah, as Dr. Hoskisson does, to reclaim Israel. Rulers and ruling classes, meaning the main top, that word top in Hebrew, ro'sh, head is often used as a title for leaders. Isaiah uses it to refer to capital cities and even the head of the head, which is the head of state.
Hank Smith:	00:32:39	Interesting. So we're losing the leadership.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:32:42	We're losing the leadership, and in fact those are the first ones to get exiled, typically. The Babylonians, when they adopt the Assyrian policy of exiling peoples, at least according to the Deuteronomistic writer of Second Kings, they take the upper crust. They take the elites.

John Bytheway:	00:33:01	The intelligentsia, and that's why Isaiah talks about babes will rule over them because they grabbed anybody that could start a revolt. They take them first.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:33:10	Yeah, exactly.
John Bytheway:	00:33:11	So if somebody invades, we all need to act really tame. Right, Hank? I'll be tame, as you said?
Hank Smith:	00:33:18	How do you catch a unique rabbit? Unique up on it. How do you catch a tame rabbit? Tame way, unique up on it.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:33:30	That one might get used at home. My daughter absolutely cringes when I tell these jokes.
Hank Smith:	00:33:36	Come on. That's a great one.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:33:37	My daughter Adele likes to tell what she describes as dad jokes too, but sometimes I tell jokes that are so cringe for her that she just says, "Oh, why do you do this to me?"
Hank Smith:	00:33:52	Hey, that sounds like the tree.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:33:53	So this one might get used in that context.
John Bytheway:	00:33:57	Tame way.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:33:58	That's right.
Hank Smith:	00:34:00	Let me see if I understand. I think I have a basic understanding of the history of Israel. John, jump in here if I'm getting this wrong.
John Bytheway:	00:34:06	I have heard Hank do the history of the House of Israel, what, in an hour, that talk you did?
Hank Smith:	00:34:12	Yeah, I hope I'm right.
John Bytheway:	00:34:13	It's impressive.
Hank Smith:	00:34:14	It's someone like Matt who can correct me. The Lord establishes the covenant, we would say, with Abraham and Sarah all the way down through the exodus, bringing them back into the land after Joshua, and then they start to go bad again. Is this about the time where they're choosing kings?

Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:34:32	Yeah. The period of the judges is cyclical apostasy, and this will relate to what John's going to say in a few minutes. There's this point in Judges 10 where the writer says the Lord was grieved or pained for the misery of Israel. In Judges 10:16 we have the writer of the text saying, "And the Lord's soul was pained for the misery of Israel." You're going to talk more about how he's grieved. Terrell Givens describes God as the God who weeps. We've got Moses 7 and we've got the Savior weeping over Jerusalem. We've got the Savior weeping at the tomb of Lazarus and at different points. This text is a testament of a God who deeply feels and is pained by what the actions of this tree, that actually represents his offspring, what they are doing and not doing.
Hank Smith:	00:35:30	So Matt, would it be fair to say this first section, Israel came back into the holy land after the Exodus, they chose kings, went into apostasy, and the Lord, it pains his soul and he says in order to save these people, "I'm going to have to scatter them."
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:35:48	I wrote a lot of my doctoral dissertation on the issue of the monarchy and the problems that that brought into Israel as a whole. In fact, the Deuteronomistic writers lay the blame of a lot of what happens to Israel at the feet of the monarchy in both the north and the south.
Hank Smith:	00:36:08	That's 1 Samuel 8, right, Matt, where the Lord says, "This is a bad idea"?
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:36:13	Yeah. They ask for a king and Saul's name interestingly means asked. You could understand that even more forcefully demanded. They demanded, they asked, they insisted on this king, and the title of my dissertation, you won't be able to see this because it'll be reversed, but you see this, it's According To All That You Demanded. It's about how, even back at the time of Moses, they were asking for intermediary leadership. They were asking for Moses to step between them and Jehovah. They wanted an intermediary. They didn't want to come into the immediate presence of God. They didn't want to have an unmediated relationship.
	00:36:53	Well, later on, they're asking for an even more mediated relationship and they want kings that will go and fight their battles for them, and they say that they want it because that's what all the nations round about them have. They want to be like the nations. And President Benson talked about experience is the school that only fools keep going to and he talks about the Samuel principle, that the Lord sometimes grants our

unwise requests as we insist on them. I'm thinking Martin Harris here.

Hank Smith: 00:37:27 I have never heard that quote. Let me find it. I love that.

John Bytheway: 00:37:32 My grandpa Jarmin used to say, "Experience is a dear school, but we fools will learn in no other." That's what he used to say.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:37:41 I think I've got this from President Benson. This is from a speech that he gave at BYU. He says, "God has to work through mortals of varying degrees of spiritual progress. Sometimes he temporarily grants to men their unwise requests in order that they might learn from their own sad experiences. Some refer to this as the Samuel principle. The children of Israel wanted a king like all the nations. The prophet Samuel was displeased and prayed to the Lord about it. The Lord responded by saying to Samuel, 'They have not rejected thee but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them.'" Now think back to the beginning of chapter four, just before the beginning of the allegory. What have they done? They had rejected the stone on which they had had safe foundation. This wasn't just what the religious elite in Jerusalem had done during the time of Jesus, but this is what Israel had been doing almost all along, is rejecting Jehovah as that stone.

Hank Smith: 00:38:45 Makes perfect sense and so he says, "I've got to do something about this. If they keep going the way they're going to go, they're going to perish."

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:38:51 I think this fits in with the allegory too. President Benson continues. He says, "The Lord told Samuel to warn the people of the consequences if they had a king. Samuel gave them the warning, but they still insisted on their king. So God gave them a king and let them suffer. They learned the hard way. God wanted it to be otherwise, but within certain bounds he grants unto men according to their desires. Bad experiences are an expensive school that only fools keep going to." Rather than say, "Those dumb Israelites," a more profitable thing to do is say, "Okay, well, how am I sometimes like the Israelites that we're talking about in this given situation?" Like when we talked about the exodus, the constant murmuring, our first reaction shouldn't be, "Those dumb Israelites. Why don't they get it?" It should be, wait a minute, how am I being like them? Sometimes, when I'm honest with myself, I look at my life and say, "Yeah."

Hank Smith: 00:39:49 "I am like that."

Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:39:50	I do that sometimes.
Hank Smith:	00:39:52	This first section, I think we understand the history. Israel is going to be scattered. Matt, you talked about Assyria coming in, taking the northern kingdom of Israel in 721, the southern kingdom being taken by Babylon, 587. That's also the time that Lehi leaves Jerusalem. That's verses one through 14. What should be our main takeaways? Let's say I'm at home or I'm on my commute and I'm listening. What do you think we get out of this? John, let's start with you.
John Bytheway:	00:40:19	One of the wonderful takeaways I had from the whole two years ago Old Testament year was that God is not detached and disinterested, that he is involved and he's interested. I really saw that in the Old Testament a lot. And this phrase, "It grieveth me that I should lose this tree," in preparation, I started underlining those and I found that or something like it in verses 7, 11, 13, 32, 41, 46, 49, 51, and 66. I remember a book years ago called Great Teaching Moments. A bunch of CES guys got together and wrote this. And in the chapter by Kelly Hawes, he told about trying to have a home evening and sending kids to their rooms to read this allegory. And the 11-year-old comes back and goes, "If I had an orchard with 100 trees and I lost one, I wouldn't care that much. But then it hit me, trees are people." And that was a great moment for him to go, "These aren't just trees, these are people," and then you see why the Lord cares so much. So that's what I start to see here.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:41:24	I teach an Isaiah class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, two sections of the Isaiah class, and I love it because they both figured this out. It's in Isaiah 35 where Isaiah talks about the wilderness blossoming as the rose. Then we looked at Doctrine and Covenants 45, which talks about Jacob flourishing the wilderness and the Lamanites blossoming as the rose, and I said, "What's the difference between these two quotations?" Both classes got it and it was beautiful the way that it dawned on them. In the Doctrine and Covenants, it makes it clear that it's people that we're talking about. The tree in the allegory, the branches, the fruit, even the fruit in some cases are people. There's ways to read the fruit. Fruit can be a symbol of deeds and actions. It's also a term that denotes posterity. We talk about fruit in that sense too.
	00:42:20	Hank, you were mentioning, what is the main point that we take away here? This allegory is about the Lord's people. It's about his children. It's about how his will is going to prevail among these children that are contending with him striving against him? How can moral agency be held intact? How can he honor

individual agency and his will will prevail? It's a mystery, but that's what Jacob said it would be, but he's unpacking it in these rich, layered, multi-tiered symbols, how that's going to happen, how he can honor our moral agency, and yet how his will is going to prevail in his vineyard.

- Hank Smith: 00:43:10 Matt, you just connected us to a great guest we had two years ago. His name's Matt Bowen. Oh, I remember him. You look a lot like him. The lesson was in Exodus 14 through 17 and we have a little booklet on our website, Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. It's free, you can get it on our website, followhim.co, where we have highlights from each lesson. And Matt says this in that lesson. So Matt, I'm going to quote a great teacher to you here.
- John Bytheway: 00:43:40 We're going to quote you to you.
- Hank Smith: 00:43:44 He says, "We need to remember the Lord has a strategy. Sometimes we need to step away from our perspective and step into his perspective." Then you say a little bit later, "The Lord is the ultimate chess master and he is thinking, there is nothing your agency can do that my accounting cannot account for." So you see that in this vineyard, don't you? He's saying, "Oh, you're going the wrong way. It's a big chess game. I'm going to move the pieces all around."
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:44:15 He is playing 5D chess. Even if we think we're playing 4D chess, he's playing 5D. We're not going to ever be able to do an end around on him.
- Hank Smith: 00:44:28 He didn't see that coming.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:44:30 That never ends well. You remember Saul, going back to the story of the kingship, when the Lord stopped giving him revelation, he thinks he can go get it through illicit means. Goes to a medium. It doesn't work. And there are some other stories like that within history. Jeroboam and the prophet Ahijah, you think you can trick the Lord into giving you the revelation that you want to be able to do it your way. I just got released on Sunday as the bishop of a student ward, and one of the powerful lessons that I learned during that time and the current stake president Felipe Cho, who's my colleague here, helped me see this, things do not go well when we try to do it our way, when we try to assert our will above God's will for us.
- 00:45:21 The Lord sometimes allows us to punch the rock and beat ourselves on the rock sometimes in our attempts to have it our

way, but when we decide, I'm going to let God prevail, like President Nelson has been telling us we need to do, things change. When we start to do it God's way, some of the challenges and other things that we face go away. Not all of them, because we're living in mortality and that's the nature of mortality, but there are certain issues and problems that we have in our lives because we continually try to assert our will over God's will. But when we recognize when we're doing that and we decide I'm going to do it God's way rather than my way, many of those problems go away and become better.

Hank Smith: 00:46:10 Matt, you think like Elder Holland, or he thinks like you, one or the other. He says this long parable does outline Israel's history, but soon enough the attentive reader senses a much more personal story coming from the printed page, the grief and godly pain of a father anguishing over the needless destruction of his family. And he's going to do something about it. He's not going to just sit and watch you go into destruction. Let me ask you both a question. Do you think in this first section we might be seeing the Lord saying, "Look, this is not going well. I'm going to help you and this helping might hurt a little bit." It came to pass that he pruned it and digged it. It sounds a little painful. What do you both think?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:46:57 It's clear that he is committed to saving the tree and saving the vineyard. He's committed. But you're exactly right, this is going to involve pruning. And there's another vineyard parable in Isaiah 27, and one of the words that's used there, Jacob's fruit has to be purged and the word is actually Kapara. It's the word for atone. Here's another Elder Holland quote from Christ and the New Covenant, page 165. He says, "Clearly, this atonement is hard, demanding and at times deeply painful work. Not just for the Lord of the vineyard, but for the trees too, as the work of redemption always is. There is digging and dunging, there is watering and nourishing and pruning, and there is always the endless approaches to grafting, all to one saving end, that the trees of the vineyard would 'thrive exceedingly' and become 'one body, the fruits being equal,' with the Lord of the vineyard having 'preserved unto himself the fruit.'"

00:48:06 Now starting page 166. "From all the distant places of sin and alienation in which the children of the father find themselves, it has always been the work of Christ and his disciples in every dispensation to gather them, heal them and unite them with their master." He just used that three trio too. "In every dispensation, the work of Christ and his disciples is to gather them, heal them, and unite them with their master."

Hank Smith:	00:48:35	I think you're right on here, Matt. There's an older talk, given way back in 1968. Not too many of us on this podcast were on the earth at that time. Two-thirds of us.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:48:46	I was not.
Hank Smith:	00:48:47	Yeah, two-thirds of us were still in the premortal life. 1968, you can find this, we'll link it on our website, called God is the Gardener by Hugh B. Brown. You can actually hear the audio of this on the BYU website, and his voice is just fantastic. The story's wonderful and the voice is wonderful. He's talking to BYU students I think at a graduation. He talks about how they're going to meet disappointment in their future and they're going to wonder if God lives and where he has gone. He says to them, "Don't be discouraged if you don't get all the things you want just when you want them." He says, "Can I tell you a quick story out of my own experience? 60 years ago, I was on a farm in Canada. So we're talking turn of the century. I had purchased the farm from another who had been somewhat careless in keeping it up. I went out one morning and found a currant bush that was at least 6 feet high. I knew it was going all to wood." I don't know what that means, but it sounds bad.
	00:49:45	"There was no sign of blossom, no fruit." He said, "I had some experience in pruning trees before we left Salt Lake to go to Canada as my father had a fruit farm. So I got my pruning shears and went to work on the currant bush. Clipped it, cut it down until there was nothing left but a little clump of stumps. As I looked at those stumps, I yielded to an impulse, which I often have, to talk with inanimate things and have them talk to me. It's a ridiculous habit, one I can't overcome. As I looked at this little clump of stumps, there seemed to be a tear on each one and I said, 'What's the matter currant bush? What are you crying about?' And I thought I heard that currant bush speak. It seemed to say, 'How could you do this to me? I was making such wonderful growth. I was almost as large as the fruit trees and the shade trees and now you've cut me down. All in the garden will look on me with pity. How could you do it? I thought you were the gardener here.'
	00:50:48	"So I said, 'Look, little currant bush. I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to be. If I let you go the way you want to go, you'll never amount to anything. But someday, when you're laden with fruit, you're going to think back and say, 'Thank you, Mr. gardener, for cutting me down, for loving me enough to hurt me.'"" Well, then he tells this story, that years had passed, "I had made some progress in the First World War in the Canadian army," and he was hoping to get a promotion. He walks into this

office where he's hoping to get this promotion and the man says, "Brown, you are entitled to this promotion, but I cannot make it. You have qualified and passed the regulations, but I cannot make this appointment." I looked over to his desk to see what my personal history showed. I saw written on the bottom of my history in large capital letters, 'THIS MAN IS A MORMON.'

00:51:46 "Excuse me. That's all, Brown." I saluted him and left." He said, "Bitterness rose in my heart and when I got to my tent, I threw my cap on the cot, I clenched my fist, and I shook it at heaven. 'How could you do this to me, God? I've done everything that I know how to do to uphold the standards of the church. I was making such wonderful growth and now you've cut me down.'" And then this great moment. "And then I heard a voice. It sounded like my own voice and the voice said, 'I am the gardener here. I know what I want you to be. If I let you go the way you want to go, you'll never amount to anything. And someday when you're ripened in life, you're going to shout back across time and say, Thank you, Mr. gardener, for cutting me down, for loving me enough to hurt me.'" And then he says He hits his knees and prayed for forgiveness for his arrogance and ambition. Really just a powerful, powerful story and analogy. Thanks for letting me take that time, guys.

John Bytheway: 00:52:50 I love that Matt has helped us see, look, the Lord's will is going to be done in this vineyard. Man's will is going to have a run at it, but ultimately the Lord's will is going to be done. And I love that recently President Nelson quoted President Benson, one of my favorite President Benson quotes, I don't have the whole thing memorized, but I know that it starts, "Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that he can make a lot more out of their lives than they can," and that sounds like the President Brown experience. It might seem like a sacrifice to give your life to God, but actually he will make a lot more out of your life than you can. But you might not see it right at first when you're getting pruned.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:53:33 We would want what God wants for us, especially if we understand how much he loves us more than we would ever want to metaphorically start living in a van down by the river through our own choices. When we think about it, that's metaphorically where we would end up, whatever it is, if we choose something else other than what the Lord is offering to us, it'd be like ending up in a van down by the river rather than inheriting the blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thrones, principalities, powers, all of the rest of it, inheriting the celestial kingdom. God is offering us so much more. We just need to recognize that even though it's sometimes a straight narrow

path to get there, it's got difficulties. I was 31 before I had met my wife Susie. I had started to wonder at that point whether I was overripe fruit on the tree.

00:54:31 Most single adults in the church could relate to this. They sometimes wonder, why is it in this timing? Why is this not happening for me right now? I have these righteous desires that I want to come to fruition, that I want to have happen, and they're not happening. I just have a testimony that the Lord is never going to abandon us. He's never going to leave us to live in a van down by the river. He is going to help us get to where we need to go. Sometimes that takes time. As Elder Holland has said, sometimes blessings come late. Sometimes they come soon. Sometimes they come late. Sometimes they don't come until beyond the bounds of this mortal life, but for those who embrace the Savior and his promises, they come. I know that's a paraphrase, but that's the idea. Now, I'll be celebrating 50 years this coming July, that I've lived long enough to look at my patriarchal blessing and to be able to see very specific things that have been fulfilled.

00:55:28 I look at my wife Susie. I look at my children, Zach and Adele and Nathan, who has passed to that next stage, but I'm grateful every day for them. I'm grateful that things worked out in the Lord's timing and not mine. I'm grateful that they happened his way and not the way I would've drawn it up if I had been charting every detail of what I wanted to do back when I was in my early 20s. The Lord is good and he is patient with us. He understands when we get frustrated. He understands. I have so many single friends, not just from my time in D.C. but from other periods of my life, and I know that they are frustrated and they feel it at a deep level sometimes when the blessings aren't coming immediately. But it is my testimony that they will come in the Lord's time and when we look back, we will want them to have come in no other timeframe.

Hank Smith: 00:56:34 Beautiful, Matt. Beautiful. Why don't we move to 15 to 28? What is this section about?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:56:40 Paul Hoskisson summarizes it to this effect. He says, "This is the only time when the Gentile grafts produce good fruit." You have the righteous and unrighteous Lehighites in the good spot of ground that ends with "the Day of the Gentiles." So this is Christ setting up his church during this period of time. The church is for the first two generations really a Jewish church. Jesus' initial set of disciples and apostles, they're all Jewish until a little later you get Peter's vision and the incorporation of Cornelius's household.

Hank Smith:	00:57:21	Acts chapter 10.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:57:23	And it's after that according to what we have in Acts that we get a lot more Gentiles, usually God-fearing Gentiles, Gentiles who are already favorably disposed to the God of Israel and to Jewish religion coming into the church. The church grows really quickly in the Roman world. On the other side of the pond, you have things going on over here, the struggle with those two branches of the Lehtes.
Hank Smith:	00:57:55	Right. Isn't that around verse 25?
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	00:57:59	Yeah. "He said unto the servant, 'Look hither, behold this I have planted in a good spot of ground.' I think that the Nephites would've read themselves into this, 'and I have nourished it this long time and only a part of the tree hath brought forth tame fruit and the other part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit. The whole I've nourished this tree like unto the others.'" The way Dr. Hoskisson has this divided running 29 through 49, the great apostasy, or through 52 depending on how you break this up, you get this phrase again, we've seen it before, "Come let us go down into the vineyard that we may labor in the vineyard." There's a couple of things I want to bring out here that I think are worth noting. It may not be obvious to the readers of this allegory. The whole allegory envisions a tripartite universe, if you will, or a tripartite world.
	00:58:54	There's the place from which the Lord and his servants are coming down to work in the vineyard, so there's that upper realm, there's the place where the tree is, the natural tree, and then there are the nether most parts of the vineyard. Skousen says that was in the original text. Rather the nether most, it was nether most. They're the same route, but nether means lower. We sometimes think it means out there, like hither most. But the word isn't hither most. It's nether most, which means lower. So we've got the realm from which they're coming down to work in the vineyard, you've got the level where the tree is, and then you've got the nether most parts of the vineyard. Think Netherlands. That means lowlands. The word Holland means that as well, like hole down. The way the prophet Joseph Smith described the temple, it represents the three principle rounds of Jacob's ladder.
	00:59:55	So the nether most parts might correspond, if you will, to the outer court of the temple, the ancient temple or the terrestrial realm, that would make the place where the tree is, which some scholars have compared to the tree of life. I think there actually are traditions, and Elder Holland mentions this, that the olive

tree is a tree of life. And that would correspond then to the terrestrial or to the holy place or to the Garden of Eden, and then you've got that upper realm from which the Lord and the servants are coming down. I think that's worth knowing. They come down from it again. They say, "Come let us go down into the vineyard," there's Divine Council language, "that we may labor again in the vineyard." That's the first time we get that kind of, that we may labor again language, but that's going to proliferate once we get down to about verse 58 and following that, "We will nourish again the trees of the vineyard. I have grafted in the natural branches again that perhaps the trees of my vineyard may bring forth again and that I may have joy again."

01:01:09 Verse 61, "That I may bring forth again the natural fruit." Verse 63, "That all may be nourished once again for the last time." And there are several more instances of this. Verse 67, "The branches of the natural vineyard will I graft in again into their natural tree." Verse 68, "Thus will I bring them together again." And verse 73, "And there began to be the natural fruit again." So what's the deal with this, we will do this again and the word again here? The name Joseph, the name of the patriarch Joseph, the name of the prophet Joseph Smith, comes from the Hebrew verb Yasaph, which in its causal stem often shows up in the scripture as [foreign language 01:01:57], or some form of that. It has the basic sense of to add, but it has the added idiomatic idea of to do something again.

01:02:12 And it's the verb that shows up in Isaiah 11:11, which Jacob will in chapter 6, verse two, when the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people. The verb there is yoseph, and it's the same verb that actually shows up in Isaiah 29:14, hinnin yoseph. The Lord says, "I will proceed or I will add to do a marvelous work and a wonder." Well, back in Second Nephi 25:17, Nephi quotes those two yoseph passages together and he says that it will be so that the promises might be fulfilled to Joseph in Second Nephi 25:21. The promises might be fulfilled to Joseph. I don't know what's in Isaiah's head, but I think we can safely from Nephi's text derive some things that are in his head. And Nephi is looking forward to the time when a choice seer, who would be named after his father, would be named after the patriarch Joseph. Remember this is in Second Nephi Three. This is Lehi quoting this prophecy of Joseph in Egypt to his son Joseph.

01:03:32 This is the four Josephs in that chapter. I think Nephi understands that Joseph Smith is going to be the agent of this Yoseph activity doing this again. So it's really interesting to me,

especially when you consider that Zenos is probably a prophet of the northern kingdom, which is sometimes called in the Old Testament either Joseph or Ephraim, and you get a lot of this language at the end that the Lord and his servants are going to do this again. "We will nourish again the trees of the vineyard." Joseph Smith would've never seen this in the text, but Jacob would, who had a brother named Joseph. Nephi would, who had a brother named Joseph. And they make a big point of their ancestry from Joseph. You remember back at the beginning of First Nephi in chapter 5, that's a really important point to them, that they're descendants of Joseph.

01:04:37 Then, that you have another descendant of Joseph way in the future, Second Nephi Three, who's going to be the agent of so much restoration to the House of Israel. So I think we could read Joseph as one of the servants of the Lord that's being mentioned here later on in the allegory. And I mentioned that I served in the California Roseville Mission in 1994 through 1996. I served under John and Valerie Hoiberg in that mission, both of whom are ardent fans of the podcast, by the way, just so you know.

John Bytheway: 01:05:16 Well, thank you.

Hank Smith: 01:05:17 Tell them thank you for us.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 01:05:19 I will. I remember a zone conference and I think, if my memory's serving me right, this was still pretty early in my time out there, where we did a deep dive into Jacob 5 and it hit me then and has never left me since just the incredible layering that this allegory has, that this parable of Zenos is so deep, so rich, and so symbolic we could spend the rest of our lives making a study of it and there would still be things to learn from it. And that is one of the testimonies to me that Joseph Smith himself is not the author of this text. He is its translator, he was the one who gets it to press, but he is not its author. This is an ancient text by an ancient author who saw a great deal.

Hank Smith: 01:06:26 And worked hard on it, you can tell, who honed it.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 01:06:29 Yeah. Just the literary details of this. This is not something you could just dictate and then have all of these rich details be there. You just can't do that. So what Joseph did is his translation gives us an ancient text that, as you said, is carefully crafted.

A Call for Help

GUEST: MATTHEW L. BOWEN



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Matthew Bowen. Jacob chapters 5 through 7.
- Hank Smith: 00:07 Matt, the second section, 15 through 28. If I'm looking at this chart that John showed us in the manual, it's the time of Christ. I've got lots of good fruit. Even the wild fruit is becoming good. You've got the Nephites and the Lamanites verse 25, part of the tree is good, part of the tree is bad.
- 00:26 But I wanted to ask you about one part of this verse 21, the servant says, "Why did you put this particular tree in this terrible spot?" He said, "That's the poorest spot in all the vineyards." And the Lord responds with, "Counsel me not. I knew that it was a poor spot of ground." I like that. Counsel me not, I knew. What are you seeing there?
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 00:51 Well, first of all, we wouldn't want to take a hard and fast stance on which parts of the world are poor spots of ground, but there are definitely spots that we might individually think, "Hey, this is not a good spot of ground." I've had to struggle my entire life.
- 01:09 At BYU Hawaii we have students in great proportions from just about everywhere in the world. And one of the things that is really striking to me is that almost every one of them has a story of struggle about how they got to the point where they could come to BYU Hawaii and then they're getting here to BYU Hawaii. And it really has hammered home because I think a lot about the whole grafting process that is a part of this allegory. The Lord has got part of the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant was to scatter Israel throughout the entire world. And now we've got Israel everywhere, even in the poor spots of ground.
- 01:56 And then the Lord from wherever he's placed them, he'll bring them to lie here and to help further prepare them for when they get grafted back in wherever the Lord is going to graft

them in the future. We ask questions, mortal questions about, well, maybe for me, why has this been such a poor spot of ground? Why have I had to struggle so much in my life where I'm at?

02:25 But again, verse 22, "Counsel me not. I knew that it was a poor spot of ground." And we have to sometimes remember the Lord knows what he's doing. And this gets back to Hugh B. Brown's experience, he knows what he wants us to become. He knows what we need to be. As President Nelson has been teaching, we've been so focused on where am I going to end up? What kingdom am I going to be in when really, just as important is the issue of what kind of person am I becoming. What body am I going to come forth with in the resurrection that's going to be what we've become. Who are we going to live with in eternity?

03:03 When we start to think about it in those kinds of terms, I think it helps us to make better sense of, well, maybe I was in a poor spot of ground or I had struggles or difficulties in my life, but the Lord knows how to compensate us for blessings previously denied us. He knows when and how and where to dispense those blessings so that we do become what he intends us to become.

03:35 And if we'll just open ourselves to that. And as President Nelson talks about, let God prevail in what he's trying to do with us, he'll lead us by the hand, he'll answer our prayers as he did with Abraham and get us where we need to go.

Hank Smith: 03:52 I love it. John, you gave a talk once called Rough Start, Great Finish. And that seems to be verse 22 and 23. This was a poor spot of ground, but look, it brought forth much fruit.

John Bytheway: 04:07 Yeah, the BH Roberts story is in that talk and it is crazy where he started. He said at one point I had to beat the dogs to the garbage. He was homeless elementary school kid. This reminds me of 2 Nephi 26:24. "He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world."

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 04:26 If we're ever wondering about the Lord's motivations for anything that he does, that's the verse to go to because whatever he does, he always does it out of love. He's never motivated by selfish human types of motivation. It's always divine. Divine love is greater than human love and divine anger is different than human anger. It's never out of selfishness with him. When he is grieved in the allegory, that's coming from not a selfish place, it's grief for us.

Hank Smith:	05:03	Speaking of being grieved, Matt, this next section, 29 through, what'd you say, 49, 50, 51? This seems like the low spot.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	05:15	Yeah, this is the low point and it even seems like the Lord's ready to give up himself on the whole project. Even though he told the servant not to counsel him earlier, it's verse 50 where the servant says, and you can imagine prophets in this role. But behold the servant said unto the Lord, "Spare it a little longer." Moses has to intervene like that a couple of times. You remember Abraham pleading with the Lord on behalf of the people in Sodom, but you wonder how much interceding and pleading prophets, seers and revelators have done on our own behalf to give us more time, spare us a little longer. We'll get this done.
Hank Smith:	05:57	There's a question that comes up a number of times, John, you probably have got it marked, but I count three. Verse 41, what could I have done more? Verse 47, what could I have done more? Verse 49, what could I have done more? It almost seems like the Lord is saying, "Look, I gave you the best possible chance and somehow you grasped defeat out of the jaws of victory."
John Bytheway:	06:27	2 Nephi 15 or Isaiah 5 is Isaiah's parable of a vineyard there. He says 2 Nephi 15 verse four. "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" It's almost the same question. Well, did you use a choice vine? Yeah, I did. Well, did you plant it in a fruitful hill? Yeah. Did you take the rocks out? Yeah. I even built a tower in the midst. And I think that's called an entrapment parable because he's asking, "Didn't I do everything?" And the audience has to go, "Yeah, you did." And then he says, "Well, actually, you're the vineyard."
Hank Smith:	06:59	That's you. Yeah.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	07:02	It's an entrapment parable like the parable of Nathan. You remember today that in 2 Samuel 12, they don't realize that they're passing judgment on themselves, but he's getting them to pass judgment on themselves.
John Bytheway:	07:15	Yeah, that's the thou art the man. Right?
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	07:19	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	07:19	Matt, what do you want us to see in this last section? How is the Lord going to save what seemed unsavable?

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 07:26 We're familiar with scriptures where the Lord says he is going to hasten his work in its time. And that's what happens here at the end. There's been a lot of this not succeeding, him not getting what he's hoping to get from the natural tree, from the branches, from wherever they're at in the vineyard.

07:47 But then he's able to press into service, you start in about verse 52, where they really start to get going again. And then he proposes what needs to be done, what kind of grafts need to be carried out. And then I mentioned the again language, that they're going to do all these things again. We ought to pick it up in verse 64 here. "Wherefore dig about them and prune them and dung them once more." There's our three again, for the last time for the end draweth nigh, and if it so be that these last grafts grow and bring forth natural fruit, then shall you prepare the way for them that they may grow."

08:28 That's what John the Baptist did before the coming of the Savior. That's what Joseph Smith and every prophet and everyone laboring under the prophets have been doing for the second coming. "And as they shall begin to grow, you shall clear away the branches which bring forth bitter fruit according to the strength of the good and the size thereof. You shall not clear away the bad 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 the vineyard."

08:57 Sometimes people wonder, why don't we just baptize everybody that wants to be baptized right away? There are places in the world where in terms of sheer numbers, we could bring in all at once a lot more than we're doing, but there have to be things in place for us to grow the church the right way.

09:18 There has to be ability to have organizational structure, priesthood leadership. And a number of things have to be in place in order for healthy growth to take place. There's healthy growth and there's unhealthy growth, but it has to be growth the Lord's way. It can't be helter-skelter in terms of the way that the church and the kingdom grow.

09:40 But that's true in our own lives as well. Sometimes we'd like on the individual level growth to happen. We'd like blessings to happen in floods, but there has to be a healthy pacing to it. We need to all individually and collectively become who and what the Lord needs us to be. That's the goal here. It's not just a random gathering of everybody. And it's not just dump all the blessings on us at once and then see if we can make sense of it

all and make good on those blessings. They have to come decently and in order and the Lord's way.

- Hank Smith: 10:19 Carefully, deliberately. Yeah, I like that. I noticed in this section, Matt, this is the only time he calls in help.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 10:26 Yeah. He brings in and he tells the servant to go get other servants. Maybe if we could just jump down really quickly to verse 71. "And the Lord of the vineyard said unto them, 'Go to and labor in the vineyard with your might. For behold, this is the last time that I shall nourish my vineyard for the end is nigh at hand and the season speedily cometh. And if you labor with your might with me, you shall have joy in the fruit, which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come.'"
- 10:57 This might be an example in the Book of Mormon of a literary or linguistic phenomena called Apokoinou. And that's where a word or expression is shared by two clauses. This with me, does that belong with if you labor with your might or does the with me here belong with ye shall have joy in the fruit, which I shall lay up? I think it's both.
- Hank Smith: 11:18 Yeah, I was going to say, which direction.
- John Bytheway: 11:19 Love it. Yeah.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 11:21 Yep. If you labor with your might with me, with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up. One of those beautiful vistas or nuggets within this text that's just sublime.
- Hank Smith: 11:34 That is. I noticed that they call the servants and you're hoping it's going to say they were amazing or they were an army, but it says they were few.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 11:46 Were few. That's consistent with Nephi's vision. You remember? When he had the vision of the tree of life, he saw that the dominions of the saints upon the face of the earth that they were small because of the wickedness of the great and abominable church. But Nephi only also pointed out that they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.
- 12:09 It's never been about the numbers with the Lord. We see in the story of Gideon, he can empower 300 to do what tens of thousands could do. It's not about the numbers with the Lord, it's about having those who are willing to be armed with righteousness, who keep their covenants so that, as President

Nelson says, they have access to the Lord's power. Because it doesn't matter, it's not a numbers game. If the servants have access to the Lord's power, they're going to be able to do everything required.

John Bytheway: 12:42 What you just said about having joy with me, so if you labor with me, you'll have joy with me. My mind went to section 18.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 12:51 How great shall be your joy.

John Bytheway: 12:53 With them in the kingdom of my Father.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 12:55 Ooh, that's really good. With them.

John Bytheway: 12:57 With them.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 12:59 I love that. Yeah, that's really nice.

John Bytheway: 13:01 I looked for the footnote, but it wasn't there. I thought, oh, I bet they put D&C 18 there. No, it's not there.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 13:07 And we should probably not miss the oneness language, which again reminds us of the Atonement, 68 and 74. "The natural fruit shall bring forth the natural fruit and they shall be one." And then as you just pointed out, verse 74, "And they became like unto one body and the fruits were equal."

John Bytheway: 13:26 Zion.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 13:27 Oneness, equality, and that should remind us of the temple. We would be uncomfortable if we saw people come into the temple really blinged out. If they were dripping with jewelry that would detract from what we're trying to do there, but we're all dressed the same in the temple. We're...

Hank Smith: 13:45 Of one heart and one mind.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 13:48 And the Lord views us equally and the fruit of the tree of life should remind us of the clothing of the temple too, the bright clothing.

Hank Smith: 13:59 Moses 7:18. They were of one heart and one mind and there was no poor among them.

John Bytheway: 14:04 I'm still stuck on verse 21. It's at the poorest spot in all the land of thy vineyard. Hank, we know that there are people who are in prison that are allowed to listen to this podcast. And just to

make an application, they may be thinking, "I'm in this poor spot right now," but look what you're doing. Look what the Lord can do. You're listening. You're trying to let God prevail.

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| | 14:30 | We get to places sometimes through our own choices, sometimes through others using our agency badly, through chance we're in a poor spot. But God can do things with people in a poor spot that are amazing and miraculous. I just hope anybody who is feeling I'm in a poor spot, look what the Lord says, "Counsel me not. I got this. I know you are. I am going to help you bring forth much fruit." I love that idea there. |
| Hank Smith: | 14:56 | I love that, John, that your verse 74, 75, 76, it's coming. You may be on verse 21 right now, but 75, 76 comes. |
| John Bytheway: | 15:07 | In your particular growth in your vineyard, the Lord knows what he's doing and he's got you. |
| Dr. Matthew Bowen: | 15:14 | And he is never done with us. Sometimes we might feel like, well, I have sinned so much or I've passed some arbitrary sin limit, but that's not the story here in Jacob 5. The story here is that the Lord isn't done with us and that he will work with us as long as it takes to get who he wants us to be and to become. That's the story. |
| John Bytheway: | 15:38 | He is so willing to labor in the vineyard, failure after failure after failure. He is going to keep working until we get to that verse 74. |
| Hank Smith: | 15:48 | I'm going to get you there. Yeah. I have to tell you both. I remember when I was heading out on a mission, my bishop said, "Hey, what verse do you want on your plaque? What scripture verse?" And I didn't know what to say. I went home and searched a couple of things and thought, "Oh, this one will work." |
| | 16:02 | But if I could do that again, it would be Jacob 5:72. "It came to pass the servants did go and labor with their might." It's tough. "And the Lord of the vineyard labored with them." Man, that is such a beautiful idea and I've noticed, I bet both of you would say too, not just in missionary work but in the work of the Lord, as you look back, you think, "He's been laboring with me. We're shoulder to shoulder with the Lord of the universe on this." |
| John Bytheway: | 16:32 | What an experience that is. Some people may be in a hunter mission and some people may be in a fisher mission to use the Jeremiah 16:16 language, where maybe you'll find one, maybe |

you can throw your net over this side. But he's going to be working with you. That's cool.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 16:51

This might be an appropriate point to bring in 2 King 6, Elisha and the young man pray that he would open his eyes that there are more with us than they that be with them. That was my father has reminded me of that so many times. He'll be listening to this. I'm so grateful that he taught me that lesson. There's always more with us than are against us.

17:16

As Elder Holland has said, "Those armies ride with reckless speed to aid the seed of Abraham." If we could have the veil parted, we would see that that's true, that there are more laboring with us. And that even the Lord himself though we might not see him, that his hand is in it all.

Hank Smith: 17:35

I can almost see verse 75, the Lord almost with tears in his eyes looking at those who did his work, blessed art thou because you have been diligent in laboring with me in my vineyard. You've kept my commandments. You've brought forth the natural fruit. You are going to have joy with me for a long time. He says in verse 76, for a long time. Just this beautiful ending. It's almost like a movie here, Matt, where it got started and then it went really dark and then it ends with this glorious conclusion.

Dr. Matthew Bowen: 18:08

It's cased that way too where it wraps up pretty quickly, where it reaches resolution pretty quickly. And then at verse 77, that last period, the end of the world is just summed up in a verse. And then when the time cometh that evil fruit shall again come into my vineyard, then will I cause the good and the bad to be gathered. And the good will I preserve and the bad will I cast away into its own place. That gets quoted actually by the Lord in Doctrine and Covenants 88. And there's going to come a time when Satan and his hosts and those select few who will not inherit a kingdom of glory will be in their own place. That conflict that has existed from the time of the Premortal existence will be at an end.

John Bytheway: 18:53

You've mentioned this before, Matt. How could this possibly come out of Joseph Smith's head? He had never seen an olive tree in his life. The furthest south he ever got was I think Washington DC where it snows. There are things about olive trees from Paul and from Isaiah, but there's nothing about burning and dunging. I think the only book that existed on olive husbandry about the time was written in 1820 and it was in French. The fact that these details are in there, it's evidence that this is an ancient text. Parasites or diseases that would

cause bad fruit if you cut those branches off and you have to burn them so that...

- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 19:36 You can't just leave them.
- John Bytheway: 19:38 Yeah, you got to burn them. And it would encumber, to use Zenos's word, your way working around the others. This is an ancient text. Got to be.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 19:47 Amen. He calls up his servants that reminded me and this is a coronation ceremony. They're going to be anointed with the oil produced by the vineyard.
- John Bytheway: 19:56 Oh, wow.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 19:56 In the vineyard.
- John Bytheway: 19:58 Oh, wow. Yeah.
- Hank Smith: 19:59 What a beautiful chapter. Honestly, I hope what we've discussed in this chapter lights a fire under people to say, "I want to go get more." Because really, what you said, Matt, you could study this for the rest of your life and there's more and more.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 20:14 And there will always be more and that's the beauty of it.
- John Bytheway: 20:17 That book that you held up, here's one chapter and here's a book. There's another one those farms folks did on King Benjamin's speech, those 700 pages. It just shows there's such depth here. In Jacob chapter six, he's going to bring up some therefores or did you notice type of thing.
- Hank Smith: 20:33 Well, let's do that then. Matt, is chapter six, Jacob saying, "Hey, let me explain this to you"?
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 20:40 Yeah, it's like Nephi does. He isn't just going to dump it on us and then leave no interpretation of it. He really does start to unpack that beginning of the first verse. "And now behold, my brethren, as I said unto you that I would prophesy, behold, this is my prophecy. That the things which the prophet Zenos spake concerning the house of Israel in which he likened them to a tame olive tree must surely come to pass."
- 21:05 And then he quotes Isaiah. Isaiah 11:11. "And the day that he shall Yoseph set his hand again, the second time to recover his people is the day even the last time that the servants of the

Lord shall go forth in his power to nourish and prune his vineyard. And after that cometh the end."

- 21:26 And then it's interesting here you're familiar with is Isaiah 11:11. That's the prophecy that Israel will be gathered from. And then he lists seven nations. And then he adds an eighth element and from the islands of the sea and it's fun to take the Hawaii students through this because any given class where you have maybe 20 people or more, you're going to find at least seven nations there and then the isles of the sea.
- 21:52 It helps them understand the seven is the important element because that's a number of fullness or completion or perfection in Hebrew numerology. But then you're getting the isles of the sea. We've got students here from every part of the Pacific.
- John Bytheway: 22:08 Listen, oh, isles. I just had to underline verse four. "He remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches. He stretches forth his hands unto them all the day long." He's a very involved Lord of the vineyard.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 22:24 And if we take the Malachi take on this, roots and branches are both ancestors and descendants. And so we're looking at something that traverses even the veil of death. He remembers the ones in the spirit world now. He remembers those on this side of the veil. He even has in mind those who are still in pre-mortality and are coming.
- Hank Smith: 22:46 I catch that in verse five. "Love God as he loves you." If that's one thing you give out of Jacob 5.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 22:54 The divine embrace. This is a theme in the Book of Mormon by the way. It begins with Lehi. "I am circled about eternally in the arms of his love." When Nephi wants to be encircled around in the robe of his righteousness. Here Jacob is saying, "Cleave unto God as he cleaves unto you and his arm of mercy is extended towards you." This idea that God embraces us.
- John Bytheway: 23:22 The Kafod.
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 23:23 Yeah. And Nibley connected it with that and the Egyptian word hpt, which is an embrace. It was drawn with arms reaching down out of heaven. And Nibley's connection was that this is the embrace that consummates the final escape from death in the Egyptian funerary rituals.

	23:38	There's a lot of language in the Psalms. I did my Sperry Symposium presentation on this this year. This is found expression in the temple in Jerusalem as well. The idea of coming under Jehovah's wings, taking refuge in his wings.
	23:54	Third Nephi, the invitation where he invites us to come unto him. "His arm of mercy is extended. He'll gather us even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings." You run around this town here, you're going to see chickens, sometimes following the mother hen. They get soaked here a lot too, so that's when they gather them up.
John Bytheway:	24:18	Keep them warm and safe.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	24:21	There's an allusion to the Psalms here too as we come towards the end. He asked in verse six, "If you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts for why will ye die?" He's quoting from Psalm 95, one of the temple hymns. Remember, why has Israel not entered into the rest of the Lord? It's because of their hardening their hearts. They've been testing the Lord.
	24:44	But Jacob wants us not to do that because the Lord's trying to bring us into his rest. He's trying to bring us to where he is, into that most holy place in the temple. It's represented by the celestial room. Jacob is very temple aware. He uses a lot of that in here.
	25:02	Verses 12 and 13. I don't think he's planning to write more. "Oh, be wise. What can I say more? Finally, I bid unto you a farewell until I shall meet you before the pleasing bar of God."
John Bytheway:	25:14	Yeah, it sounds like a closing.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	25:15	I think he's ending, but then in chapter seven he's got to tell us some more.
John Bytheway:	25:21	I tell my students when we read Jacob six 12, "O be wise, what can I say more?" That oh, be wise has a brother Obi-Wan. This is O be wise and Obi-Wan Kenobi, those brothers.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	25:35	Thank you, John. This one's getting used too. My daughter is going to be horrified.
John Bytheway:	25:42	It's a groaner or is it a laughter? Yeah, those are, oh.

Dr. Matthew Bowen:	25:45	This one is going to be what have you done to me? That's when it's so viscerally painful to her that she feels like I've traumatized her.
John Bytheway:	25:58	I like the fact that you've mentioned that Jacob sounds like he's done here, Jacob 6:13. There are, I want to say four major writers of the Book of Mormon, Nephi, Jacob, Mormon, Moroni. Nephi, Jacob and Moroni all have a phrase like that. "I shall meet you."
	26:15	I love the Bible. I get to teach the gospels. And I'm just saying that Book of Mormon has a different kind of tone of voice where it's, "I'm going to see you." Nephi says it, Jacob says it, Moroni says it. I will meet you one day and it's fun to imagine such a meeting as that, these authors saw us and wrote to us, which is so different. It invites you. You've got to take a stand on this.
Hank Smith:	26:40	Yeah, I love it.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	26:42	I think that this is another evidence that this isn't Joseph. Those final testimonies are not the testimonies of someone trying to perpetrate a pious fiction or a fraud. These are real individuals who are bearing a final testimony that they will meet us there before God. And we will know then if we don't know now, we are going to know then that they had the knowledge that they had. It's being left to us to decide what we're going to do. Remember President Benson said the Book of Mormon's not on trial, the members of the church and the world are on trial with what we do with this witness of Jesus Christ.
John Bytheway:	27:24	Nephi is like, "If these are not the words of Christ, judge ye, God will show you. And you'll see me face to face." And there's a tone of voice there. Wow. This is they really did see us and write for us.
Hank Smith:	27:38	Speaking of let's meet up and talk, Jacob adds this story. A man named Sherem comes among the people and he's doing something that we haven't seen before. We've seen Laman and Lemuel, murmuring, getting upset. But this Sherem wants to throw off the work. Matt, what should we see in chapter seven?
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	27:58	When I felt traumatized as a missionary were times when there were people that would confront me specifically trying to shake me from the faith. And that's the phrase he uses here where he says, "And he had hoped to shake me from the faith

notwithstanding the many revelations and the things which I had seen concerning these things. For I had truly seen angels."

- 28:20 Maybe he even has in mind here the Lord who he saw. Remember 75:11. Nephi cites him as a witness of Christ, one of his three, Nephi himself, Jacob and Isaiah. And they had also ministered unto me and I also had heard the voice of the Lord speaking unto me from time to time. Therefore, I could not be shaken.
- 28:40 But there's something that you try to avoid contention as a missionary, you realize that it never gets you anywhere. But then sometimes despite what your efforts, you find yourself in a situation where someone is just determined to try to contend with you and shake your faith. And that can be pretty traumatizing.
- 28:59 I think that's one of the reasons he's telling us this because this guy really tried to make a full-frontal assault on what he already knew to be true. And he did it and the way that he does, it's really interesting because he uses very specious reasoning, very fallacious reasoning. He asserts knowledge. For no man can know of such things for he cannot tell of things to come. Or he asserts things and you get down to the epistemology of well, how does he know that? How does Sherem know that? He doesn't know that he's just asserting these things.
- 29:34 It's pretty typical of people who try to challenge the faith of Latter-day Saints and others, others who have faith in God, faith in Christ. He asserts them as if they're true and he provides no evidence. There was a saying that one of my Catholic university professors had. [foreign language 00:29:56]. "What's freely asserted can be freely denied."
- 29:58 But Jacob goes even further. Remember when he does more than just dismisses what Sherem is saying. He explains exactly why his reasoning is off base.
- John Bytheway: 30:10 I noticed once that in verse seven he says, "For he cannot tell of things to come." But then in verse nine he says, "There's no Christ, neither has been nor ever will be," as if he's telling us of things to come. He's-
- Dr. Matthew Bowen: 30:23 He cuts himself off on the knees.
- Hank Smith: 30:24 Yeah.

John Bytheway:	30:25	I also think we ought to mention where did this guy come from? Was he on the ship?
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	30:30	That's a question that a lot of scholars have asked. Is this evidence for others in the land?
Hank Smith:	30:36	A Non-Lehite? Right.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	30:38	I know one scholar has looked at this and thinks Sherem is maybe a Zoramite.
Hank Smith:	30:43	Book of Mormon Central has an interesting article. Did others influence Book of Mormon peoples? We'll put a link to it in our show notes.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	30:50	But yeah, it's a good question. Where does this guy come from?
Hank Smith:	30:54	One thing I'd like to highlight that I think moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas could highlight this week is Jacob 7:5. "He had hoped to shake me from the faith notwithstanding the many things I had seen. I truly had seen angels. I heard the voice of the Lord. I could not be shaken." I noticed that Jacob doesn't say notwithstanding the many revelations my father had or the many revelations that my brother had had. What does President Nelson say? You got to take charge.
John Bytheway:	31:26	Take charge of your own testimony. Take responsibility. Yeah. My kids have a CD of yours. Is it called Unshaken?
Hank Smith:	31:34	Yeah. It's called Unshaken. Yeah.
John Bytheway:	31:36	Unshaken, yeah.
Hank Smith:	31:37	I was pretty set on this idea that you have to have your own experiences. Joseph Smith, "I have learned for myself."
John Bytheway:	31:44	I love it. Yeah.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	31:46	I think it's really personal for Jacob that he's attacking specifically not only his faith but his faith in Christ. And what that faith in Christ means to Jacob personally. And there have been some Latter-day Saint writers who've written on even criticizing Jacob for his response. But I think that overlooks just how personal this is to him.
	32:08	Even after Sherem challenges Jacob for the sign and a sign is given him, he falls to the earth without strength. And there's

this point at which Sherem wants to do a mea culpa. Jacob summarizes and says, "And he spake plainly unto them and denied the things which he had taught them." Verse 17, "And they confessed and confessed the Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost and the ministering of angels. And he spake plainly unto them that he had been deceived by the power of the devil. And he spake of hell and of eternity and of eternal punishment.

32:43 And he said, 'I fear lest I've committed the unpardonable sin for I've lied unto God. For I denied the Christ and said I believe the scriptures. And they truly testify of him. Because I have thus lied unto God I greatly fear lest my case shall be awful, but I confess unto God.'" Maybe some people expect more of a sympathetic response from Jacob when it comes in just a second.

33:05 "And it came to pass that when he had said these words, he could say no more and he gave up the ghost. And when the multitude had witnessed that he spake these things and was about to give up the ghost, they were astonished exceedingly insomuch that the power of God came down upon them. And they were overcome that they fell to the earth. And this thing was pleasing unto me, Jacob, for I had requested it of my father who was in heaven for he had heard my cry and answered my prayers. And it came to pass that the peace and love of God was restored again among my people and they searched the scriptures and hearkened no more to the words of this wicked man."

33:39 Maybe some people would expect that he'd be more sympathetic here, but I think that people don't appreciate just how much he was traumatized I think by this guy and that explains why he even told us this story. That this was a real challenge to the stability and the spiritual wellbeing of his people and even to the degree that he felt in himself. He was directly challenged by Sherem.

John Bytheway: 34:05 I feel like in the New Testament the law of Moses had lost its really clear connection for some people pointing to Christ. In the Book of Mormon, it seems it never loses its connection to point them to Christ except for right here. It's interesting to me. This is not Korihor saying there's no God. This is Sherem saying, "Yeah, there's a God, but we're supposed to keep the law of Moses. And you guys are converting the law of Moses to the worship of a being which will come many 100 years hence," he says in verse seven. He's trying to disconnect the law of Moses from pointing to Christ. Is that what you see Sherem doing?

Dr. Matthew Bowen:	34:38	And that's a great cross-reference. Remember 2 Nephi 25 at the end. I mean that's what Nephi is doing. He's trying to help us understand how thoroughly Christological and Christ connected the law of Moses is. And that's what's supposed to guide Nephi's descendants.
	34:58	The small plates document, Noel Reynolds has talked about a lot about this and other scholars have. There were some very practical functions that the small plates of Nephi had for Nephi religious claims. For example, Nephi's right to rule that ran counter to the claims of the Lamanites.
	35:20	And what Sherem is trying to do here I think cuts really hard against the grain of what Nephi and later Jacob considers right. He perceives this as more of an existential threat to the community than maybe we sometimes think. This isn't Jacob just defending his ego. This is Jacob at his core defending his testimony of Jesus Christ and the Christ-centeredness of his community. He can't just let that pass.
John Bytheway:	35:53	Yeah. I love that verse 23, "The love of God was restored among the people." I mean that's very 4 Nephi, "Because of the love of God, which dwelt in the hearts of the people."
Hank Smith:	36:03	John, Matt, I wanted to do a little shout-out to Ashly Stone and Lauren Rose. They run a podcast called the Come Back Podcast. You can find it on YouTube. Listen to some of these episodes. After leaving the church, Elise felt misunderstood. And this episode is how God reached out and softened her heart.
	36:24	Here's another episode. Stephen Murphy left the church after being exposed to anti-Mormon content. After much studying and researching, he returned. And there's another episode, unexpected pain and loss led Susan to leave the church. After 15 years away she returned.
	36:41	And it goes on and on. I connect that to that verse. It came to pass peace and love of God was restored. And that can happen in someone's life. Matt, what do we need to see before we let you go?
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	36:55	Another evidence that Joseph is not the author of this comes in verse 26, but I think this is beautiful. And it's become to mean more to me as I'm about to traverse the age of 50 line. Says, "It came to pass that I, Jacob, began to be old. And the record of this people being kept on the other plates of Nephi wherefore I conclude this record declaring that I have written according to

the best of my knowledge by saying that the time passed away with us.

37:22 Also, our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream. We being a lonesome and a solemn people. Wanderers cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation and in a wilderness and hated of our brethren, which caused wars and contentions wherefore we did mourn out our days."

37:43 A lot of the students I have here are from diaspora communities. Either families have even been removed from their homelands sometimes for one or more generations. Jacob's feeling it all, all of the trauma of exile and displacement, he's feeling it. But I will tell you, no young man would write this. If we're looking at Joseph as the author of this, there's no way he wrote this. Saying the time had passed away with us and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream.

38:20 I look back at the years with my children and it's gone so fast. The time with my wife since we met in suburban DC and Virginia, it's just gone so fast. You're back in your 20s and your 30s and you think, "Ah, I've just got all the time in the world." The hourglass just keeps running and all of a sudden you notice it's half empty and then it keeps running. And you realize we're all on the clock and this beautiful thing we call youth isn't forever.

38:53 Those are not the words of a young man. Those are the words of a prophet of God who has seen his life go and the years of his life go. And he's experienced them in really traumatic ways in exile, cut off from members of his family who chose a completely different path. I just love that. It's one of my favorite verses in to bring it back to the Savior. Again I think this chapter is about not just Jacob's life and the end of his life, but his testimony of Christ. He lived it to the end of those days. That passed like as unto a dream.

Hank Smith: 39:32 I feel the same way, Matt. I keep telling my wife, "I got old too fast. I got wise too slow." Right.

John Bytheway: 39:41 It's so true. I put in my margin no happily ever after. And for Jacob who was, who Lehi had just the best talk with him in 2 Nephi 2 about why there's opposition and all things and everything. Not a happy life, but I love what you've said because I look back too and just go, "When did all of this happen? How did this go by so fast? It's like a dream."

Dr. Matthew Bowen:	40:04	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	40:06	I appreciate that insight. I'm going to be thinking about that. I want to look at the last word in verse 27 because some people stumble at Jacob saying, "Brethren adieu." Now in the French Book of Mormon, it says, "les messieurs. See you later." No, I don't know what it says, but my kids who I've got two French speakers and a son-in-law that's a French speaker now, adieu and adios come from the same place.
Hank Smith:	40:36	Oh, wow.
John Bytheway:	40:36	Go with God and that makes sense.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	40:41	There's a finality to adios and adieu that there isn't with...
John Bytheway:	40:46	With see you later. Yeah.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	40:48	Yeah. See you later.
Hank Smith:	40:49	I love it.
John Bytheway:	40:50	Yeah. That's a French word, but he wanted to get that meaning of go with God.
Hank Smith:	40:56	Matt, we know we got to let you go. Can you give us 90 seconds? Tell us how you feel about the Book of Mormon.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	41:03	It is a witness of Christ that I hope will sink deeply into and penetrate our souls in this coming year in a way that its words never have before. I hope that we will see Christ, that we will connect more deeply to his atonement and the ways in which he's seeking to gather us to him in fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant.
	41:30	That's what we've been talking about. That's what Jacob 5 is about. It's about Christ's painstaking atoning work to gather us to him and help us to become all that we have the capacity to become. And that his will will be done. He will continue to work with us, he'll continue to completely honor our agency. But we make it so much easier on ourselves and often others when we decide to let God prevail in our lives.
Hank Smith:	42:02	The Sherems may defame, but the truth of God will go forth.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	42:08	And that segues nicely into that standard of truth.

Hank Smith:	42:12	Yeah. Matt, thank you. Thank you for spending time with us today.
John Bytheway:	42:16	Thank you.
Hank Smith:	42:16	You could have been on the beach out there in Hawaii.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	42:20	Now I get to go into the classroom. And I'm energized because of what we've experienced here, so thank you to you, John, and Hank and to your wonderful staff too. You're making a huge difference. It is moving the needle.
Hank Smith:	42:34	Thank you for saying that about our team. We love our team and we love you.
Dr. Matthew Bowen:	42:39	It's completely mutual. Love your team. Love both of you. Thank you for all that you've shared here, all that you always share so generously. And I could speak for all of your listeners that we all love you.
Hank Smith:	42:52	We'll take it. We'll take it. We want to thank Dr. Matthew Bowen, Dr. Matt Bowen for being with us today. What a treat. How fun. We want to thank our executive producer, Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors, David and Verla Sorensen. And we always remember our founder, Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We've got a lot of years to cover, Enos, Jarom, Omni, words of Mormon on followHIM.

A PEEK INSIDE YOUR OPPONENT'S PLAYBOOK



Hank Smith:	00:03	Hello, everyone. Welcome to another followHim Favorites. John and I are telling a single story to go with each week's lesson this year. John, we're in Jacob 5, 6, and 7, and I have a story for you. I think you'll like it because you like to watch football. You enjoy...
John Bytheway:	00:17	I do.
Hank Smith:	00:18	In Jacob 7, Sherem is this faith shaker, and Jacob says, "He wants to shake me from the faith." My students have asked, "In a book about Jesus, why are these full chapters about people like Sherem, and Korihor, and Giddianhi who are very anti-Jesus? Why have these chapters in there?"
John Bytheway:	00:35	It's so hard to engrave on plates. Why would they get any space to that guy?
Hank Smith:	00:40	Yeah, here's a book that's supposed to bring you to Jesus, and here's all these people who don't want you to go to Jesus. I want to tell you this story. See if you can listen with your spiritual ears here. Go back with me to the 1900's. I was in high school. I was the team captain of the football team. I know you're looking at me, but it was a small school. I played for Snow Canyon High School. Coach Bill Jacobson, great mentor of mine. Fantastic man. He was really into high school football. And we were playing a team coming up this Friday, and he said, "Come to my office. We're going to watch game film." So this is where you watch the other team that you're going to play this week. As we're watching, he wants me to notice how they do what they do.
	01:21	Well, at this one point he says, "I want you to watch this left tackle." Now, John, you know what a left tackle is, but if anybody's listening doesn't know what a left tackle is, you're going to have to go ask someone who knows about football. They'll explain it to you.

	01:33	This left tackle, he's the one who's going to either block for the run or he's going to block for the pass. When it was going to be a running play, when the quarterback was going to hand the ball off, he would put a lot of weight on his hand in a three-point stance. He'd put a lot of his weight on this hand because he's going to run forward. If it was a passing play, he would not put so much weight on his hand. In fact, he just put his fingers on the grass because he was going to stand up to block.
John Bytheway:	02:01	You could see that from the film.
Hank Smith:	02:03	Yeah. So it was just a little bit lazy, but it gave away the play. Coach Jacobson, Coach Jake, he said, "I want you to line up on him, and I want you to yell out what the play's going to be." I said, "Okay, I can do that." Go running onto the field that night, and there he is, right? I'm like, "Wow, I've only seen him on TV." I lined up on him. He put a lot of weight on his hand. I yelled, "Run." All the defensive players with me, they kind of scooted forward because they know it's going to be a run. We were able to stop the run without question. John, you know football. If you know it's going to be a pass or a run, this is a huge advantage.
	02:44	The next play, they come down, and he puts his fingers on the grass. I yell, "Pass." Everybody scoots back a little bit for the pass. And then he comes down the next one, and I'm yelling out pass, run, and they were so mad. They would back up their huddle. They thought we were listening to their huddle, so they would back up further, and you could hear them yelling at each other, "How do they know? How do they know?" And they're yelling at their coach, "They know what we're going to do." In fact, John, a couple of times they would audible, so they'd change the play at the line, and this guy, he would change his stance.
John Bytheway:	03:25	He would change too, yeah.
Hank Smith:	03:27	I would yell run, pass. John, we just destroyed this team. By the end of the first quarter, it was 28 to nothing. They could do nothing against us, and I don't think that kid ever knew. I don't think he ever knew that he was the one that was giving the play away. John, don't you think that some of these bad guys, you might call them in the Book of Mormon, aren't they kind of giving us the playbook of the adversary?
John Bytheway:	03:57	President Benson, I think, said something like that. The tactics they use they're old. They'll use the same tactics today.

Hank Smith:	04:03	I have that quote right here, John. President Benson, "The Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It shows you the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our days." As I read these type of chapters, I should be looking for strategies. People who want to shake my faith, what are they going to do? I can read these chapters, and when I see it, I already know it's going to happen.
John Bytheway:	04:27	But when we hear Sherem, we're like, "Oh yeah, we've heard that before." In fact, Sherem says, a man cannot know of things which are to come. Who else is going to say that later on?
Hank Smith:	04:35	And you go, "Oh, a Korihor." How did Jacob deal with that? Oh, how did Alma the Younger deal with Korihor? I already know how to do this. I already know the playbook. John, thanks for listening to my high school football story.
John Bytheway:	04:49	Yeah. Hank, if coach would put you in, you would've been state champs. No doubt in my mind.
Hank Smith:	04:55	No doubt about it.
John Bytheway:	04:57	Do you remember the final score? That's pretty fun. 28 to nothing in the first quarter.
Hank Smith:	05:01	Yeah. 28 to nothing in the first quarter, and then I think Coach Jake let everybody play. Everybody. Even people out of the stands, they could come play.
John Bytheway:	05:09	He was recruiting out of this. Let's bring the Mighty Mites down here.
Hank Smith:	05:13	Oh, I'd never seen a more frustrated team than that team. In fact, that's why I'm not telling you the name of the team, because I'm sure we have listeners who have kids at that school.
John Bytheway:	05:21	I remember that game.
Hank Smith:	05:23	Yeah. Maybe our left tackle. Maybe he's listening. He's like, "Wait, maybe that was me."
John Bytheway:	05:28	I did that. Oh. Right.
Hank Smith:	05:31	Well, we hope you'll join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're with Dr. Matt Bowen this week from BYU Hawaii, and he explains these chapters in masterful ways. You'll want to join us

for that, and then come back next week, we'll share another story for followHIM Favorites.