Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship

Volume 61 Article 18

1-1-2024

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Abstract: *In this study, three intersecting images are traced through the small plates until Jacob 5, where they directly (or by implication) culminate in the final section of Zenos's allegory. The three images appear fused together in Nephi's and Jacob's writings. Specifically, this literary study tracks the images of the olive vineyard, the sheepfold and pasture, and the cornerstone or rock foundation. These oddly fused (or adjacent) images, though complexly employed, can be understood best as representing not only Christ but a gospel-centered record to be revealed by him. Fundamental to this reading is the idea that the Good Shepherd gathers his sheep by means of a stone or rock comparable to the gospel of Christ. In making this case, it is helpful to compare related texts such as 2 Nephi 25 and 3 Nephi 27. The value of this analysis is to demonstrate a unity amidst complexity in the aesthetic of the Book of Mormon and to offer alternative readings of certain scriptures, especially Jacob 5. Zenos's allegory is read here as tragicomedy and as one locus for the aforementioned images.*

John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, not unlike the Book of Mormon, deals with the Creation, Fall, and Redemption of humankind. It is also an epic patterned after the Eastern aesthetic of the Holy Bible that this study will term fusion poetics. This term refers to a poetic characterized by the varied and complex mingling of symbols and metaphors to illustrate diverse aspects of a topic or theme. In Deuteronomy 33:26–29, for instance, "God" is compared in rapid fire, and without

differentiation or discussion, to a raptor, a rock with arms (a personified place of refuge), a shield, and a sword. In effect, God is described in this passage by means of several fused (adjacent) images that act as metaphors. This aesthetic is found in the writings of Nephi and Jacob, who apply mixed imagery involving plants, sheep, and rocks or stones. Further, and more broadly, whereas the Miltonic epic seeks to explain the fulfillment of the earliest messianic prophecy (Genesis 3:15), the Nephite record has much to say about messianic prophecy and the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:3). Milton's narrative poem is a creative expansion of Genesis 1–3. It is more of a literary epic than a historical one, though. Yet, both works claim to be inspired and employ an aesthetic of fusion that, for Milton, is manifest in his passion poetics.[1] Especially for Milton, this creative aesthetic of fusion has implications for his reader's interpretive experience, and ultimately, his/her salvation.[2] As in Hebrew prophetic tradition, Milton, an aspiring poet-prophet, pulls together disparate textual strands into a oneness that is excessively detailed. This dense detail may disorient his reader. When dictating his literary testament, Milton drew heavily on his wide learning, thereby creating an intertextual complexity to rival those epic works before him. Without overstating the comparison between these distinct religious texts, except to say that as Milton (and the prophets among the Hebrews whom he imitated) had a tendency to gather together in-one scattered biblical images in making an apocalyptic theodicy, so did, it appears, the Nephite prophets, who were also students of the Hebrew prophetic tradition and imitators of the same, seek to collect all things into one in Christ (1 Nephi 13:41; 2 Nephi 29:14). From the reader's perspective, a study of the Christian poetics of fusion in Milton is endless (or indeterminate),[3] and, as will

1. Erin Henriksen explains Milton's passion poetics in her work *Milton and the Reformation Aesthetics of the Passion*, Studies in the History of Christian Tradition, vol. 145 (Boston: Brill, 2010). The phrase "passion poetics" simply refers to how an author represents that which is sacred and has to do with the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, such as the events surrounding the Lord's crucifixion. In Milton's case, he uses various poetic strategies to emphasize his particular Puritan-influenced theology while avoiding approaching representation in a way that would appear too traditional.
2. Robert Crossman, "Salvation through Reading," in *Reading Paradise Lost* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 205–48.
3. My dissertation repeatedly demonstrates this aesthetic of indeterminacy. Samples from Milton's work abound. Indeed, the aesthetic influences much of the work after him. Matthew Scott Stenson, "Lifting Up the Serpent in the Wilderness" (Dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE, 2009).

be seen, a study of the poetics of fusion (involving the symbols of the vineyard, the sheep pasture, and the stone building) in the writings of Nephi, Jacob, and others are equally unlimited.[4]

To be clear, this study is *not* focused on Milton's writings, but on a family of related Bible and Book of Mormon metaphors and images associated with the pastoral tradition, which tradition is a Christocentric, Shepherd-poetics. Milton is but one example of fusion poetics used here to indicate that this characteristic of blended metaphorical imagery is and has been common to great literature. Where there is ambiguity and paradox due to fusion of imagery, there will also be a measure of interpretive indeterminacy, and thus, only tentative conclusions can be drawn. Nevertheless, the primary method of this inquiry into the pastoral imagery of the early Book of Mormon will be literary, comparative, and, ultimately, reflexive.[5] As shall be demonstrated, this fused family of pastoral imagery has a close relationship to apocalyptic literature, as the Shepherd figure is a protector and deliverer of his sheep from harm. I make no claim (unlike Milton in regard to his own epic) about the literary superiority of the Nephite record when compared to Western, fictional masterworks or comprehensive histories. The Nephite record — especially the small plates — is prophetic

4. The vineyard (or orchard) is related to the pastoral tradition. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, for instance, in her analysis of the genre of pastoral poetry describes the garden (or its equivalent, vineyard) and the shepherd (or herdsman) and their relation to the finer distinctions and nuances of pastoral tradition. Lewalski, *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985), 173–78. The traditional pastoral, first developed by "Theocritus . . . in the third century B.C.," concentrated on shepherds and their meditations under trees. Later, according to one literary handbook, "Christian pastoralists combined the golden age of pagan fable with the Garden of Eden in the Bible, and also exploited the religious symbolism of 'shepherd' (applied to the ecclesiastical or parish 'pastor,' and to the figure of Christ as the 'Good Shepherd') to give many pastoral poems a Christian range of reference." Given the literary genre's origin, I refer to the vineyard and shepherd imagery common to prophetic texts only loosely as pastoral. M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 8th ed. (Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005).
5. By literary, it is meant that this study's interest is less rhetorical, logical, or even, in one sense, doctrinal, than it is dramatic, comparative, and reflexive. In reading Zenos's allegory from this vantage point, and, as fiction that contains important doctrinal truths, some observations may even ring true to the narrative but not necessarily to "triumphalist" interpretations of it. George Handley, "The Moral Risks of Reading Scripture," in *Reading Nephi Reading Isaiah*, ed. Joseph M. Spencer and Jenny Webb, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2016), 97.

and yet challenging to read. Its plainness appears to be only relative. The full range of grammatical issues has been explored by Royal Skousen and his teams. Instead of doing more of this work, I accept that the inherited text in its current final form has problems (marks of its authenticity) but suggest that there is an impressive consistency of imagery throughout its early pages complementing its strong, latent spiritual power. Much of the small-plates-record is not "literary," therefore, but is, importantly, Messianic or Christocentric,[6] and though it may seem anachronistic, apocalyptic.[7] Simply put, I read Nephi's first two books and parts of Jacob's book as being somewhat ironic. In other words, these early books seek to impart hope of deliverance through a divine warrior figure, while describing the end of an age by destructive fire (1 Nephi 1:20).

Both Nephi and Jacob present their pastoral, apocalyptic materials in a fragmented and interfused way that may shed light on the family of terms and images that converge near the end of Zenos's allegory in Jacob 5. As will be demonstrated, Jacob 5 — a two-part drama narrative and theodicy[8] in form and purpose — is indirectly a repository for these three intersecting images. Ultimately, by reflecting on this triangulated imagery, we discover that for the Nephite writers the *vineyard* represented the world; the *shepherd* and *sheepfold* represented Christ, the Good Shepherd, and his servants and Church; and the *cornerstone* or *rock* may properly be associated with not only Christ but a messianic book that centers upon his gospel that when received and believed brings its readers unto him before the end.

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6. Nephi evolves as to how he uses the name of God. Early in his record he calls the Savior and Redeemer *the Messiah*; later he calls him *Jesus Christ*. Terryl Givens has noted this. I have also written about it elsewhere. I will use the names of *Messiah*, *Christ*, and *Shepherd* synonymously as do Nephi and Jacob. Terryl L. Givens, *2nd Nephi* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2020), 26–27. Also see Matthew Scott Stenson, '"Wherefore for This Cause': The Book of Mormon as Anti-type of the Brass Serpent," *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship* 43 (2021): 291–318, journal.interpreterfoundation.org/wherefore-for-this-cause-the-book-of-mormon-as-anti-type-of-the-brass-serpent/.
7. I have explored various apocalyptic characteristics in the early Book of Mormon elsewhere. This earlier research required situating the ancient material in light of more recent intertestamental apocalyptic literature. Matthew Scott Stenson, "Lehi's Dream and Nephi's Vision: Apocalyptic Revelations in Narrative Context," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (2012): 155–79, scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol51/iss4/13/.
8. A theodicy describes a text that seeks to justify the ways of God to men.

In making this argument, it must be acknowledged that Christ is the Rock of our Salvation. Nephi and Jacob confirm this truth often using biblical language (2 Nephi 4:30, 35; 2 Nephi 9:45; Jacob 7:25). However, being creative as biblical writers also are, they feel perfectly at liberty to use natural imagery in a flexible manner. This claim should not surprise us since fluid metaphors are common in great literature, including modern revelatory literature. Additionally, New Testament writers may be the most inventive of all when it comes to employing the image of the rock or stone. Be that as it may, the three recurring images at the center of this study, a Nephite poetics or pattern, come together *in Christ* and his latter-day work. This combining of otherwise disparate images occurs in the second half of Jacob 5, as it does elsewhere in the Nephite record.

In this study, after defining scriptural metaphor and describing its poetic flexibility, I describe three commonly used Hebrew images, the same that were many decades ago identified by the literary critic, Northrop Frye. In his *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye explains, "The city, the garden, and the sheepfold are the organizing metaphors of the Bible and of most Christian symbolism." [9] He says that the best example of the employment of these images is John's Revelation. These three biblical images also dominate much of our attention when reading the small plates of Nephi. This preliminary work of definition and description is a necessary precursor to demonstrating how Jacob may wish his reader to apprehend the final section of Zenos's dramatic allegory where the three images again converge and culminate with redemptive implications. More than just identifying each image's occurrence on the small plates of Nephi, however, their intimate relationship with each other and Christ will be demonstrated. Finally, three other texts from the Nephite volume will be brought to bear on the argument to show that the reading has broad warrant and potential (1 Nephi 15; 2 Nephi 25; 3 Nephi 27).

Most recent scholarship on Nephi and Jacob has come from Joseph M. Spencer, Terryl Givens, and Deidre Nicole Green, yet none of them take an interest in this particular subject.[10] The aesthetic conclusions presented here, tentative in nature, have potentially important theological implications; nevertheless, they are not inconsistent

9. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 141–46.
10. Joseph M. Spencer, *1st Nephi* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2020); Terryl L. Givens, *2nd Nephi* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2020); Deidre Nicole Green, *Jacob* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2020).

with the scholarship to date on the small plates portion of the Book of Mormon. Further, some general concepts found in the comprehensive anthology of essays collected by Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch are integrated here.[11] One similarity that this proposed reading of Zenos has with these earlier contributions is that the exegesis herein, guided by a literary method, is mostly non-symbolic, or better, non-reductive. Accordingly, this study is interested in clustered patterns of fused images as opposed to a single symbol and its traditional meaning(s).

Instead, this study considers the small plates and Zenos's allegory. The approach to Zenos will be to treat his allegory as tragicomedy, with special emphasis on the second half of it when, as Jacob tells us, the "servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard" (Jacob 6:2).[12] This literary approach to the allegory is perhaps anachronistic, but that Renaissance genre (a reworking of ancient forms of drama in that era) nevertheless best explains how Zenos's allegory is structured, even if Zenos was not himself aware of that particular genre. Indeed, it is suggested here that Nephi and Jacob understood and adapted Zenos in a way that must have pleased him (Zenos) (3 Nephi 10:16). The value of this approach is to use the fused images to make better sense of the second part of the allegory, since it is there that they seem to converge and culminate.

Sacred Metaphorical Imagery and Its Flexibility

One recent study on biblical metaphor will assist in defining terms and demonstrating that metaphor may often have flexible application. Goran Eidevall has written that "[m]etaphor is a figure of speech whereby we

11. By "non-reductive," I mean not primarily interested in the symbols in some one-to-one relationship with reality. Instead, I am more focused on, as M. Catherine Thomas writes, the "meaning [that] lies in the aggregate of allusions and associations," 13. Arthur Henry King, similarly acknowledges that Zenos's allegory does not contain reductive "exact allegorical equivalency, but [open ended] symbolic equivalences." Thomas and King, *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 140.
12. According to Aristotelian dramatic theory, plays are to be unified as to time, place, and action. Tragicomedy is a later generic development, which allows for the sequenced-fusion of tragedy and comedy. Tragicomedy refers to a plot structure that begins in division and trouble and ends in unity and fruitfulness. Comedy does not necessarily imply humor, but it often suggests the religious and the ridiculous (or marvelous). Russ McDonald, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2001), 81–90.

speak about one thing in terms of which are seen to be suggestive of another."[13] With this, he further complicates the concept. For any given metaphor, there are "two different semantic fields" at play: the "*source domain*" and the "*target domain*."[14] The source domain is "deployed in order to map or (re)structure" the target domain, according to this expert. The metaphorical image works, then, to make new meaning when source and target concepts are creatively linked. Eidevall explains that some cultural metaphors have a "capacity to generate a rich variety of ideas and linguistic expressions."[15] He cautions that metaphor is not merely "one word substituting for another," nor is it solely a "*motif*," which can be literal or non-metaphorical.[16] Moreover, not until recently has "metaphor analysis" moved beyond considering imagery as merely rhetorical window dressing. It is now believed that prophetic metaphor may have more "theological dimensions"[17] than first supposed. Finally, Eidevall explains that metaphor can contribute to textual structuring or the cohering of a longer text. "[R]elated metaphors contribute to a sense of continuity," even as they suggest "contrast," "reversal[,] and transformation."[18] This structuring effect will have application to the interfused metaphorical imagery of Jacob 5.

Eidevall demonstrates in his study that certain "combinations of images" may be found in the biblical prophets, specifically Isaiah (and, I might add, Zenos).[19] He suggests that images may over time even entirely transform. He uses Isaiah 31:4–5 to demonstrate this point. In this passage, YHWH is portrayed both as a "rapacious lion" *and* as a "fluttering bird." One image is suggestive of powerful defense, the other of delicate care. These "strikingly divergent" images, according to Eidevall, both represent "divine agency." In this example, the type of image transforms, but the subject remains constant.[20] Somewhat similarly, it will be shown in this study that three types of images (vineyard, shepherd/sheepfold, and cornerstone or rock) may not only converge but represent various theological concepts, including, in the

13. Goran Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," *The Oxford Handbook of Isaiah*, ed. Lena-Sofia Tiemeyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 409.
14. Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," 410.
15. Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," 410.
16. Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," 410.
17. Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," 409, 411.
18. Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," 412.
19. Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," 414.
20. Eidevall, "Use of Metaphors," 414.

case of the cornerstone, both Christ and a book centered on him and his doctrine/gospel.

In Deuteronomy 32:1–43, the Song of Moses, the image of a rock is variously used as a metaphor for the *Lord himself*, *his miraculous works* (the rock is a place to obtain sustaining nourishment and drink while in the wilderness, for instance), and *his enemies* (32:4, 13, 15, 18, 30–31, 37). The Song tells us that "he [the Lord] made him [Israel] to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock" (32:13). Further, the enemy who is identified as a "rock" in certain parts of the Song constitutes the idolatrous object of the peoples' trust, a false god: "For their rock is not our Rock" (32:31). Moreover, it is implied in the Song, as in Eidevall's example, that "the Rock [the Lord]" has a paternal *and* maternal character: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young. . . . *So* the Lord alone did lead them" (32:11–12). That is, the writer employs the word "Rock" or "rock" to represent the Redeemer himself and much more.

This common cultural image of the rock is further flexibly employed later in the Old Testament in passages such as Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 8:13–16, and Isaiah 28:16. In these additional scriptures, the cornerstone or rock is metaphorically associated with such things as buildings, paths, and traps:

> The **stone** which the builders refused is become the **head stone** of the corner. (Psalm 118:22)
>
> Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a **stone of stumbling** and for a **rock of offence** to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken. Bind up the testimony, and seal the law among my disciples. (Isaiah 8:13–16)
>
> Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a **stone**, a **tried stone**, a **precious corner *stone***, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (Isaiah 28:16)

According to Christian tradition (Romans 9:32–33; 1 Corinthians 1:23, 3:11–12, 10:4; 1 Peter 2:6–8), the Old Testament passages cited above are understood to straightforwardly apply most often to the person of Christ: "Sanctify the Lord of hosts *himself*" (emphasis added).

This traditional usage of the metaphor of the stone or rock is consistent to a healthy degree with the Book of Mormon. Helaman 5:12 is the most familiar instance of that unsurprising claim. However, as indicated, there appears to be room within the corridors of the Nephite record (and other modern revelations) to suggest that there may be more going on than is supposed in certain passages such as in Jacob 4:15–17. The challenge is not to allow the conventional understanding connected with familiar passages like those quoted above to prohibit us as readers from perceiving the potentially nuanced imagery of these and other prophecies.

Three Common Hebrew Images

There are three common Hebrew images evident in scripture. These are, in turn, examined in the following sections.

Vineyard/garden imagery

Amidst this vast array of sacred imagery, certain families of images may be said to belong together. This seems to be the case with the images of the vineyard, the sheepfold, and the stone. The image of the vineyard is commonly found in the Old Testament. One such picture of the vineyard is in Isaiah 5:1–7. The vineyard in this allegoric depiction is a vineyard atop a "very fruitful hill." The husbandman of the vineyard recounts his efforts to clear the vineyard of "stones" and plant it with the "choicest vine." He recounts fencing it to protect it and caring for it by pruning it and digging about the trees in it. However, the husbandman finds that despite his care for his vineyard, it brings forth "wild grapes." Because of the corruptness of the vineyard, the husbandman promises to "take away the hedge thereof" that it might "be eaten up" and "trodden down." Isaiah draws the lesson out of the allegory: "the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel." This undiluted vineyard image clearly has a strong relationship to the imagery of Zenos's allegory of the vineyard in Jacob 5.

Sheepfold/pasture imagery

The imagery of the sheepfold and pasture also has a pervasive presence in the Old Testament. Perhaps the most familiar iteration of this imagery can be found in Psalm 23:1–4:

> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters.

> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

This undiluted metaphoric image suggests that the "shepherd" is he who leads his sheep to feed and rest in safe places. And even when faced with the prospect of danger and death, the sheep can trust in their deliverer's "rod" or "staff," by which he will keep them safe. This same imagery can be found in the prophets:

> He [the Lord] shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. (Isaiah 40:11)

Stone/building imagery

To get at a final image, consider Psalm 118:21–24, where we find the image of the stone as it relates to building and civilization. This particular passage appears to be alluded to by Jacob in Jacob 4:16–17. Here is the language of the psalm:

> I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This next image from Genesis 49:22–24 is invoked early in the Old Testament. We can see the mixing of all these images into one picture. This fused passage is found in Joseph's blessing under Jacob's hand:

> Joseph is a **fruitful bough**, even a **fruitful bough** by a well; whose **branches** run over the **wall**. The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the **shepherd**, the **stone** of Israel:)

This final example of Old Testament imagery demonstrates that the writer of this passage fused together the vineyard ("fruitful bough"), the sheepfold ("shepherd"), and the stone ("stone of Israel") when referencing the seed of Joseph. This imagery is not used exclusively to refer to the house of Joseph, but the mixture of images is a signature mark of the early Nephite record. However, it will be demonstrated

that the stone that we so often associate with the Good Shepherd of Israel's sheep is a symbol more multifaceted than that. The stone on which to build, according to the Nephite writers, appears to be the record they are preparing, a record that powerfully testifies of Christ (2 Nephi 3:5, 13, 18–21, 23–24). For example, one perceives the three images coming together near the end of Zenos's allegory to underscore the role of the Nephite record in restoring the house of Israel, especially the Jewish remnant of the house of Israel.

This comparison between record and stone makes sense since the word of the Lord is reliable and everlasting. From at least the time of the ancient Egyptians, sacred records have been prepared on materials such as metals or stone in order that they might be preserved for future generations. Stones have also been used in interpreting records of more ancient origin (Mosiah 28:13–16). The Nephites were well aware that the "finger of [the Lord]" had written the law on the tables of stone to all Israel when they were at the foot of Sinai (2 Nephi 3:17). In fact, Lehi and Nephi, using Joseph of Egypt as their guide, suggest a parallel between the work of Moses and Aaron to receive the written law on tables of stone and Joseph Smith's work to translate a written record that could become a "spokesman" (3:17–18). Joseph Smith as a "choice seer" would bring the record to light (3:7), having it conveyed to him from a stone box (itself under a stone), and then translating it with a seer stone. Moroni later describes his people's record as a light-emitting stone: "it [the record] shall shine forth out of darkness" (Mormon 8:16). The record taken from the hill would gather all the remnants of Israel unto the Shepherd and Stone of Israel.

Jacob's Introduction and Allusive Imagery

How does this family of sacred images manifest itself in Jacob 4–6? Or more specifically, how do these images coalesce in the final part of Jacob 5? These questions will soon be examined. First, we will look into Jacob's reference to the multiple stone-prophecies alluded to in Jacob 4:15–17. There, he appears to allude to at least Psalm 118:22–23; Isaiah 8:13–15; and Isaiah 28:16, but not necessarily in that order. How one reads Jacob 4:15–17 largely dictates the sense that can be made of Jacob 5 and 6. This will be explained shortly, at least in tentative terms. In brief, we understand the introductory passage to present a Jewish problem born of unbelief and provide a miraculous redemptive solution born of belief in Christ and his gospel.

Isaiah 8, a chapter that Nephi recorded but otherwise never directly

interacted with (2 Nephi 18), poses a dilemma: Did Jacob only have in mind 2 Nephi 18:13–15 (Isaiah 8:13–15) as he introduced Jacob 5 in Jacob 4:15–17 (if he did at all), or was he instead also thinking of other scriptural prophecies and the gospel record he was then at pains to produce? The record he was fashioning in metal would benefit future generations in bringing them to Christ (Jacob 4:1–5). Did he consider the record he labored over to be the "great, and the last, and the only sure foundation, upon which the Jews can build" (Jacob 4:1–4)? These questions arise because both Nephi (recorder of Isaiah 8:13–15 on the small plates) and Jacob use the words "stumbling" and "stone," but they do not use the particular phrase "stone of stumbling," except in the case of 2 Nephi 18:14. That is, 2 Nephi 18:14 contains the only instance of the phrase in the entirety of the Nephite record. Further, Jacob is one of only two writers in the Book of Mormon that uses the phrase "sure foundation," and the only one to use "safe foundation," itself a non-biblical phrase (Jacob 4:15–17). Nephi never employs either full phrase. "[S]ure foundation" is an Isaian phrase, one that only appears in Isaiah 28:16, a verse never directly quoted in the Nephite record. Given this rhetorical and allusive complexity, Jacob appears to deploy these related words and phrases to describe 1) the Jews' rejection of Christ throughout the centuries, *and* 2) their latter-day recovery when they would come to a knowledge of him and his gospel in a two-part introduction to Zenos's allegory.

The question of authorial intention is never easy to ascertain and impossible to confirm. Moreover, there are no easy answers when one attempts to disentangle such a scripturally allusive and, considering its prime position in Jacob 4–6, potentially consequential passage. To understand Jacob's introduction to Zenos's allegory, it is perhaps best to read the Jewish history referenced in Jacob 4:14–15 as extending throughout many centuries of time, as reaching from pre-exilic times to the first century, and from the first century to the latter days when the Jews would be restored and converted to Christ. In what follows, it seems clear that the two-part introductory passage (Jacob 4:15 *and* 4:16–17) interacts at least as much with Isaiah 28:16 and Psalm 118:22 as it does with Isaiah 8:14. The essential language concerning the Jews and their unfortunate past but promising future follows. Notice during these select introductory verses the temporal pivot that is located between Jacob 4:15 and Jacob 4:16. This rhetorical junction at the beginning of Part 2 signaled by the phrase, "But behold," shows intended contrast:

> *Part 1:* And now I, Jacob, am led on by the Spirit unto prophesying; for I perceive by the workings of the Spirit which is in me, that **by the stumbling of the Jews**[21] **they will reject the stone upon which they might build and have safe foundation**. (Jacob 4:15)
>
> *Part 2:* **But behold, according to the scriptures,**[22] **this stone shall become the great, and the last, and the only sure foundation, upon which the Jews can build**. And now, my beloved, **how is it possible that these** [Jews]**, after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner**? (Jacob 4:16–17)

In these verses, Jacob appears to use terms such as stumbling, stone, and safe/sure foundation only conventionally. Nevertheless, there may be more to this. Isaiah 8, a chapter that, according to Joseph M. Spencer, falls within the arch of "one continuous story [progressing] from disaster to promised redemption" (Isaiah 6–12), or from problem to solution, undoubtedly prefigures not only the rejection of Isaiah but of Christ by the first-century Jews.[23] Christ would, according to Isaiah, become to many of them a "stone of stumbling and . . . rock of offense" (Isaiah 8:13–15). This is how the New Testament writers use the prophecy.

Even so, because biblical prophecy can be nuanced and iterative, and because biblical metaphors can be flexible, and because Nephi and Jacob said as much, it seems reasonable to assert that Jacob may have in mind in his introduction to Zenos's allegory *not only Christ's first-century rejection but the record of his people. This record would, in a later generation, be instrumental in the recovery and conversion*

21. This verse of scripture does not say that the Jews stumbled at the stone, but that because of their stumbling at something else, they would reject the stone upon which they might build. The most likely explanation of this teaching suggests that because the Jews stumbled at the Lord's words in their path, they would reject him, the stone on which they might build. In the verse, stumbling stones are mixed with a cornerstone, and the one follows the other sequentially in time.
22. Whereas v. 15 does not directly allude to former scripture, vv. 16–17 do. The phrase "according to the scriptures," suggests that Jacob has in mind in vv. 16–17 not only Zenos's allegory, but likely passages of scripture such as Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16.
23. Joseph M. Spencer, *A Word in Season* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2023), 182.

of the Jews. This seems likely since he has just discussed its making (Jacob 4:17), the value and power of the word of God (4:8–10), and Christ and his Atonement (4:11–12). Zenos's allegory is, after all, primarily shared to illustrate the restoration of the Jews, once "the Gentiles had received the fulness of the Gospel" (1 Nephi 10:12–14). The role of the Gentiles is not described in Jacob 4, but becomes important as one reads the small plates and the allegory itself. The Gentile fulness has been associated with Zenos's allegory, the Nephite record, and Israel's restoration since at least 1 Nephi 10:14 (see also 1 Nephi 15:12–20; and 3 Nephi 16:4–5). It is the writings coming from the prophesied seer named Joseph that would bring to pass "much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren," as Lehi told his son Joseph (2 Nephi 3:24).

This claim about the temporally divided nature of Jacob 4:15–17 as signaled by the central statement, "But behold, according to the scriptures, this stone [Christ] shall become the great, and the last, and the only sure foundation, upon which the Jews can build," does not appear to require much more explanation. Note that there seem to be at least two temporal dimensions operating within Jacob 4:15–17, much as there are in the story of disaster and redemption stretching from Isaiah 6 through Isaiah 12, by way of Isaiah 8. This temporal sequence in Jacob 4:15–17 (and Isaiah 6–12) may explain why Isaiah 8:14 *and* Isaiah 28:16 are usually allusively coupled together in this specific sequence in the New Testament (Romans 9:32–33; 1 Peter 2:6–8). As indicated, Jacob 4:15, a verse that identifies the *Jewish problem*, seems mostly to allude to Isaiah 8:13–15 and the first-century rejection of Christ; and Jacob 4:16–17 (verses that introduce what will become the *restorative solution* in Jacob 5 and 6) appears to allude to other prophecies such as Psalm 118:22 and Isaiah 28:16, which are better understood as pointing to a latter-day restoration of the Lord's ancient covenant people.

Hence, the "stone" or "safe foundation" in Jacob 4:15 seems to represent Christ himself and his words spoken in the first century while among his people. While, says Jacob, the "sure foundation" once having been "rejected" will finally result in that same foundation ("it") becoming the "head of their corner" (4:17). Because of the temporal shift between 4:15 and 4:16, the later "foundation" seems to refer to something before Christ's Second Coming, and thus, besides Christ. This later "foundation" is located at the end of the intriguing question, "And now, my brethren, how is it possible that these, after having

rejected the sure foundation [Christ as referred to in 4:15], can ever build upon *it* [a later sure foundation] that it may become the head of their corner?" (4:17). It is as if Jacob understands the preposterous nature of what the scriptures predict.

Jacob refers to these prophecies at the beginning of 4:16: "according to the scriptures" (see also 3 Nephi 23:1–5). He implies using the questioning phrase, "how is it possible," and the emphatic word, "ever," that that which he will soon point to by means of the allegory and his subsequent commentary will be miraculous. And yet, Jacob promises to disclose (if he can) "this mystery" (4:18). Logically, if what follows Jacob's introduction in Jacob 4:15–17 dramatically culminates in a depiction of the Gentile servants of the Lord preaching the "good word of God" before the "end," then the nature of the later foundation referred to in Jacob 4:16–17 on which the Jews would build is not likely to be Christ himself, but that which he brings forth as a marvelous work and a wonder to draw all persons unto him who will believe on his words and obey his gospel (6:2–3, 7–8; see also 2 Nephi 27:23, 26; see also Isaiah 28:16). Thus, that later sure foundation would be a foundation associated with Christ and his gospel, but not with his personal presence.

Jacob 4–6

How does this discussion of Jewish and Nephite imagery and these sequenced prophecies help readers understand Jacob 5's ending? It is not my desire here to examine all of Jacob 5, as it is the longest Book of Mormon chapter, a chapter that is combined with Jacob 4 and 6 by most commentators (and in the 1830 edition). Jacob 5, as currently constituted, contains 77 verses and is usually divided into four or five sections for convenience by those who teach it.[24] Like Lehi's dream and Nephi's vision, Zenos's allegory is often mined for its symbols. Modern commentators agree that the allegory demonstrates the compassionate commitment of the "master of the vineyard" toward all the people of the earth. But how may the Nephites have understood the narrative since it was written by one of their fathers, one whose teachings they often invoked? To examine that question, I will assume

24. Grant Hardy generally divides Zenos's allegory up into eight sections. He organizes his divisions around the concepts of decay and remedy. This study is primary interested in what Hardy terms the "One Last Effort." Grant Hardy, *The Book of Mormon: Maxwell Institute Study Edition* (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2018), 146–48.

that the Nephite fathers would have been most interested in the subtext of the allegory, as it has something to say about their society and role in the plan of redemption (Jacob 5:13–14, 24–25, 38–46).

Significantly, Zenos's allegory is introduced with a question that immediately returns Jacob's reader back to the work of Nephi and to the words of his father (1 Nephi 10). The question: "how is it possible that these [first-century Jews], after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner" (Jacob 4:17)? It appears that Jacob quotes Zenos's allegory to answer this specific question about the restoration of the Jews, a subject with which Nephi had a deep fascination (1 Nephi 15:19–20; 19:20). In reality, however, Zenos's allegory somewhat puzzlingly addresses far more than that question. The unabridged allegory describes the scattering and gathering of the house of Israel and the Gentiles and the Gentile's important role in the promised restoration of the house of Israel before the end. It is easy, therefore, to lose the baby (subtext and question) with the bathwater. For convenience, I break the allegory into only two parts (Jacob 5:1–51; 5:52–77) following a generic divide common to some Early Modern literature.

Zenos's allegory can be read anachronistically as a tragicomedy that explicitly and implicitly pulls together and concludes the fused imagery common to Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob. The three-part imagery of 1 Nephi appears to culminate in the latter episode of Jacob 5, where all things come together in Christ and the finishing of his work.

Genre of Tragedy

In general terms, tragedy as used here "refers to a literary structure that moves toward an unhappy ending and thus implies an unfavorable assessment of human experience." According to the theory of it, "tragedy ends in annihilation, misery, separation, and loss." In tragedy, "the emphasis is on failure, waste, disappointment, and self-destruction." Often in tragedy the protagonist is depicted in such a way that the audience can experience a "range of possible responses." This complicated reception is experienced since the protagonist often falls into suffering because of his own "talent" or "tragic flaw."

Genre of Comedy

Comedy here refers to a literary structure, be it drama or novel or film that moves toward a happy ending and implies a positive understanding of human experience. It does not in this sense then refer to humor

but to narrative structure. "Comedy moves from confusion to order, from ignorance to understanding, from law to liberty, from unhappiness to satisfaction, from separation to union, from barrenness to fertility, from singleness to marriage, from two to one." Furthermore, "virtually all comedy has a religious dimension."[25]

Genre of Tragicomedy

As one might suppose, then, referring to Zenos's allegory anachronistically as a tragicomedy suggests that we may choose to see the structure as moving from separation and failure (its first half) to union, productivity, and oneness (its second half). Applying this later genre to the ancient allegory is only meant to assist in pointing to the oneness in Christ that may be emphasized in the last sequence of the allegory. In the end, the apparent failure of the weeping master of the vineyard, a failure born of his concern for all of his trees and fruit, is rectified when a servant (with other servants) is called and a work comes forth. The work, Jacob suggests, has to do with the carrying forth of the word of God (Nephite record) and the nourishing of the vineyard one last time (Jacob 6:2, 6–8). This happy ending for those branches not cast into the fire brings together the three images common to the early part of the record.

Zenos's expansive allegory begins in a tragic mode but ends in a comic one (Jacob 5:1–49; 50–77). Its ending emphasizes oneness in Christ through nourishing by the good word of God. Here, three points are made about Zenos's allegory: 1) it is a fictional tale that is more about a single remnant of the house of Israel (Lehites) than about the house of Israel or even the Jews as we are led to think initially (Jacob 4); 2) it combines the imagery of the vineyard with that of the sheepfold by means of the act of Gentile nursing or nourishing; and 3) it demonstrates that nourishment through the word of God — which word is the sure foundation or cornerstone on which to build alluded to in Jacob 4:16 — is how the restoration of the house of Israel (and by implication, the Jews) will be effected. To make this last point, two teachings of Joseph Smith are useful, since they each parallel Jacob's stated purpose for the sharing of the allegory and are themselves apocalyptic texts.[26]

25. McDonald, *Bedford Companion to Shakespeare*, 81–89.

26. If Matthew 24 answers the questions of "*when* shall these things be" and "*what* shall be the sign of thy coming," then Doctrine and Covenants 45 (itself patterned after Matthew 24) addresses the issue (not unlike Zenos's allegory

Lehi's and Nephi's earlier teachings assist readers in grasping the nuanced relationship between the vineyard, the sheepfold, and the cornerstone. In the Nephite poetic formulation, though it may seem odd to us, it is the stone (word of God, voice of the Good Shepherd) that effectively gathers the vineyard's complexity into the safety of the sheepfold. This same combination of biblical images is replicated in 3 Nephi where the Good Shepherd promises to gather his people in a day when the Nephite record will come forth according to the prophecies to reconcile the nations "unto him" in advance of the earth being burned by fire (3 Nephi 24:1–6; 3 Nephi 25:1–3).

Although the Lord has been described as the "Rock" of his people's salvation since at least the time of the Song of Moses, rock or stone have many other profitable scriptural connotations (Deuteronomy 32:1–43). Consistent with Moses, Nephi refers to the Lord as the "Rock of [his] salvation" and the "rock of [his] righteousness" (2 Nephi 4:30, 35). However, when explaining his father's prophecy (1 Nephi 10), itself laden with imagery from Zenos's allegory, he apparently associates his own record with the "fulness of the gospel" among the Gentiles (15:12–14). The scriptures repeatedly refer to the gospel or doctrine of Christ (as opposed to the person of Christ himself) as the rock on which we are to build (1 Nephi 13:36; 3 Nephi 11:31–40; 27; Doctrine and Covenants 11:16, 24; 18:2–5, 17). There is no inconsistency in doing so. In fact, according to Nephi, it is not until this gospel and doctrine of the Redeemer would come forth among his father's seed (and all nations) that they would "rejoice and give praise unto their everlasting God, their rock and their salvation" (15:15). Thus, as indicated earlier, they and others of the house of Israel would "come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer" (1 Nephi 10:5). In this way, they would receive "nourishment from the true vine" and enter into the true "fold of God" (15:15).

This sequence is not at all surprising when one considers both Nephi's teachings and the Good Shepherd's subsequent sayings

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as employed by Jacob) of "*how* the day of redemption will come" for the house of Israel and in particular the Jews (Doctrine and Covenants 45:17). Joseph Smith's letter to Mr. Noah C. Saxton in 1833 also answers the question of *how* the day of redemption will come and also *why* it must. Joseph Smith, Letter to Noah C. Saxton, 4 January 1833, Joseph Smith Papers, josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-noah-c-saxton-4-january-1833/1. Unfortunately, there is not time in this project to flesh all this out. It is presented here only to suggest that the reading is not incongruous with other scriptural texts.

while among his other sheep. In Nephi's vision we learn that the Lord would "manifest himself unto all nations [including to the Jews found in all nations]," and that his words would be written down and preserved to "come forth unto the Gentiles" (13:35, 42). And that "in them [that is, in the sacred Nephite record] shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation" (13:36). The record would make known to all people how they may come unto him (13:40–41). All would become one with him if they would "come according to the words which shall be established by the mouth of the Lamb" (13:41). From these Nephite teachings, then, we learn that the gospel and doctrine of Christ contained in the Nephite record would be instrumental in bringing souls into the fold of the Good Shepherd (13:41; 22:25). This is how the Jews were to build again in a latter day after having rejected their cornerstone. It is Nephi who indirectly explains the restoration of the Jews before his brother even raises the question about how it will be done.

The allegory's tragic first half

Zenos's allegory, an allegory that appears to be alluded to also in Isaiah and Paul (Isaiah 5:1–7; Romans 11), is structured in a way to draw special attention to the remnant of the house of Joseph through Lehi. The first part of the allegory is about division, a tragic trope. Early in the allegory, Zenos informs his target audience that many "young and tender branches" were scattered throughout the earth, "some in one, and some in another" part of it (Jacob 5:2–14). Of the "natural branches" that are scattered, Zenos reports that "another branch," "the last," is divided even further into two different factions, neither producing the same fruit as the other, though both are on a "good spot of ground" (Jacob 5:24–25). These factions are not just divided from the "house of Israel" but divided from each other, or they are at least producing different kinds of fruits (tame and wild, respectively). However, it is agreed upon by the "master" (and servant) of the vineyard to spare that branch producing wild fruit "a little longer" that the fruit of reconciliation may occur before the winter. Meantime, though, the vast vineyard is corrupted and begins to produce less than good fruit, even producing "bad fruit" (Jacob 5:29–49). At this point, according to the master, the vineyard's olive trees are ready to be "hewn down and cast into the fire" (Jacob 5:37, 42, 46–47, 49). Thus, Jacob's reader learns that for the sake of sparing half of one precious remnant, the whole vineyard is allowed to plunge into jeopardy (Jacob 5:45). As in classic tragedy,

the protagonist's (the master's) seeming miscalculation (he seems surprised at the unfortunate result) to delay the harvest to spare the wild part of the precious natural branch allows the entire vineyard to become corrupt (Jacob 5:28–39). The emotional climax of the overall allegorical structure — the master's suffering and tears over his merciful but problematic decision — occurs about midway through the narrative (Jacob 5:40–49).[27]

The second half of the allegory is about sparing the vineyard for one more grand attempt to save its trees so that the natural branches can be "grafted" into their mother tree, and the wild branches can be grafted into the "natural branches" that have been scattered and hid in the "nethermost parts of the vineyard" (Jacob 5:38–39). The rhetorical effect of this crossing of branches is described in terms reminiscent of the sheepfold, as we shall see. However, the special attention paid to the wild natural remnant (Lamanites) is no longer traced by the tale's prophetic narrator, Zenos. Instead, his mind is swallowed up in the redemptive second half of the unfolding story. Of interest here is the poignant question posed by the tragic figure called "master" to his servant (and, in a sense, to himself): "Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard" (Jacob 5:47)? This significant question is never answered and is very different than the question posed by Jacob when introducing the allegory. The servant replies to his master's searching question: "Is it not the loftiness of thy vineyard?" (Jacob 5:48). The problem with this response is that the servant has not answered the specific question the master asked. The question was *who* not *what*.

In its narrative context, the corruption of the vineyard did not occur because of the branches' "loftiness," but it would seem because of an error in judgment due to the merciful character of the master (and servant), coupled with the "loftiness" of the branches. (That he errs within the world of the allegory may be an uncomfortable proposition for some, but we must not see the work of dramatic fiction that is the allegory as equivalent with our theology. Doing so tends to blunt our reading as we impose on the text.) Thus, the precious natural branch initially removed to a "good spot of ground" that seemed essential to the speeches and actions of the tragic first half of the allegory is now set

27. Aristotle in his analysis of tragedy explains that the tragic protagonist ideally suffers precisely because of his good character. The tragedy that befalls him (and his family) is the result of a "great miscalculation." The error of the good person evokes pity for him. Aristotle, "The Poetics," in *The Critical Tradition*, ed. David H. Richter, 3rd ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin, 2007), 67–68.

aside to make room for the reconciliation of the house Israel through the fulness of the Gentiles. In the final act, itself comic or reconciling, servants among the Gentiles carry forth "in [the Lord's] power" that which nourishes the vineyard (Jacob 6:2). The final gathering of all in one is center stage in the allegory's second half (Jacob 5:50–77). The precious remnant's continuance is implied (Lehi's house), but not specifically pointed to again. The precious remnant disappears from the allegory while, later, in Jacob 6, their record is pointed to in Jacob's commentary on Zenos (Jacob 6:1–8). Zenos appears to have a less obvious interest in the precious remnant than does Lehi, Nephi, or Jacob.

Nevertheless, Lehi and Nephi use Zenos, as we have seen in 1 Nephi, to teach about their nation's destiny (and about the destiny of the house of Israel, including the Jews, with whom they sometimes identity.)

The allegory's comic second half

Zenos turns from underscoring the mercy of God in sparing Lehi's seed to his mercy in sparing all who will respond to this attempt to nourish the vineyard once more. The second half of the allegory (Jacob 5:50–77) takes the tragic divisions characteristic of the opening acts and begins to suggest a reconciliation of the scattered parts into one unified whole. Zenos's ending especially blends the imagery of the vineyard temporarily spared burning with the coming forth of a new restorative work (one the Nephites equated with a Christ-centered book). For Lehi, as indicated, the "graft[ing] in" of the natural branches into their mother tree had to do with their "com[ing] to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer" through the "fulness of the Gospel" to the "Gentiles" (1 Nephi 10:14; 1 Nephi 15:13). That suggests that Lehi and his sons may have read the redemptive second half of the allegory in light of the record that was to come forth according the covenants of the Lord.

Zenos's ordered speeches and delayed actions having to do with the preaching of the word take place in a vineyard setting. In the allegory's second half, we learn of "good" and "bad" fruit growing together in the same field (Jacob 5:65–66; cf. Doctrine and Covenants 86:4–7). We learn of the scattered "natural branches" being swapped for the wild ones that had been in-grafted to the original mother tree. Further, we learn of the "last" (possibly first-century Gentiles) becoming "first," and the "first" (possibly first-century Jews) becoming "last" (Jacob

5:63; see also 1 Nephi 13:42). This comingling of the natural and wild branches is intentional and directed by the master. Whereas the first half of Zenos's allegory is somewhat regional (for instance, individual remnants in certain lands are referenced) and recounts corruption and separation, the hiding of branches here and there, and the master's occasional visits to his transplants; the second half of the allegory pulls together and redeems on a grand universal scale the vineyard's full history while, surprisingly, introducing us to new terms that suggest the imagery we are tracking in this study.

Significantly, near the end of the story the master does not labor anymore alongside his earlier servant but among his many Gentile "servants." He does this that he might "lay up [fruit] unto [him]self" (Jacob 5:71–72). It appears that the master feels a sense of urgency and of responsibility for what has occurred to the vineyard. He has unfairly placed blame on himself: "What could I have done more in my vineyard?," he asks, although we know, unlike him, that he has been and is the embodiment of compassion and caring toward his trees and fruit (Jacob 5:47). The master has tasted the bitterness of nearly losing all of his efforts already, and thus now calls many others into his vineyard that together they may nourish and prune the vineyard "this last time" (Jacob 5:62).[28]

So, what does this complex vineyard imagery of separation and restoration have to do with the contrasting simplicity of the sheepfold as suggested by some of the earlier material on the small plates? The vineyard and the sheepfold as images seem so different from each other. Ancient sheepfolds were often made of tree branches woven together into a fence enclosing the sheep, the shepherd being the door to the pen (2 Nephi 9:41–42; John 10:1–18).[29] At other times, the sheepfold might be cave-like with rocks and stones stacked near its mouth for the orderly and safe coming and going of the flock to their pastures to feed. Called by their shepherd, the sheep would return from their feeding and watering into the safety of the enclosure where he, and the hireling servants under him, could stand watch while the

28. A similar shift from servant to servants occurs in Isaiah 40–55. These chapters of Isaiah speak of the redemption of the house of Israel by means of the Gentiles.

29. 2 Nephi 9:41–42 seems to also be a mixed assortment of images. The beloved passage combines the "gate" to the covenant path spoken of by Nephi in 2 Nephi 31 with the bar of God and an implied reference to the door of the sheepfold. The phrase "keeper of the gate" certainly evokes the Good Shepherd. The context of the passage, however, situates it at the bar of God.

sheep rested for the night. These cultural details suggest that the images of the vineyard and sheepfold are not entirely unrelated, and that they even can draw on the same natural details on occasion (the shepherd also is said to have a rod or staff that he might guide and gently prod the flock along the safest ways, not unlike what the word of God does for believers).

Be that as it may, to get at how Zenos's allegory is indicative of the prophecies Nephi records (and later Mormon records of Jesus's teachings), I must discuss the new terms that Zenos introduces into the last part of his allegory without signal or commentary. These new terms (new to the allegory if not also to the Nephite record) are comingled with the already familiar earlier terms in the final half of the allegory.[30] These new terms include such phrases as "prepare the way" (Jacob 5:61, 64), "equal in strength" (and its variants) (Jacob 5:66, 73–74), and especially, "they shall be one" (Jacob 5:68), and "they became like unto one body" when nourished by the word (Jacob 5:74). Thus, in the allegory's second half the parts of the narrative no longer converge at the tame mother tree as before but at the feet of the merciful master himself. This shift in narrative focal point is evidenced by the many times in the allegory these directional phrases (and others like them) are repeated: "unto me" (Jacob 5:54, 75), "unto him" (Jacob 5:74), "unto himself" (Jacob 5:74), "unto myself" (Jacob 5:8, 11, 13, 53, 71, 77), "unto mine own self" (Jacob 5:18–20, 23, 29, 54, 76), or even "for mine own purposes" (Jacob 5:54). The direction of the narrative by its end is to gather to the Lord.

We learn that the master of the vineyard is greater than any of the trees he cultivates. He is thus the center to which all is gathered in one by the process of nourishing with the good word of God. Accordingly, it is no surprise that oneness in Christ by means of the word is a major theme in the second part of the allegory in contrast to the separation and scattering characteristic of the first half that befell Israel for presumably not being responsive to the voice of their Shepherd. The new terms, "equal in strength," "they shall be one," and "they became like unto one body," have a relationship to the theme of oneness near the end and seem to return us to the Good Shepherd prophecies

30. Many of the words in the allegory are dissimilar to the Book of Mormon at large. The vocabulary of the allegory is not complicated, and it is redundant; nevertheless, its terms are unlike others found in the Book of Mormon. Even so, the allegory's diction and concepts have influenced Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob.

signaled in the early Nephite teachings and in the prophecies on the brass plates that Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob were so familiar with. The transition from the natural tree to the Lord and the use of phrases concentrating on coming unto him that we may be gathered in one also remind Jacob's reader of earlier (and later) references to the prophecies pointing to the day when the Lord's people, according to the promises, would be of "one fold and one shepherd" (1 Nephi 13:41; see also 2 Nephi 29:13–14). Seeing the Good Shepherd motif in the final act of the allegory may seem an interpretive stretch; nevertheless, it is reasonable if one considers more closely again its context.

The allegory's comic second half (continued)

In what sense does the second half of Zenos's allegory suggest the sheepfold, let alone the cornerstone or rock on which Jewish Israel (and all others among the nations) may build? To attempt to answer that question it may be useful to further examine the concept of nourishing. Nourishing, as mentioned, is a concept that Nephi seems to have borrowed from Zenos or Isaiah. Accordingly, Nephi (and Jacob) defines the nursing (or nourishing) of the Gentiles in two ways: 1) as the Lord's, "rais[ing] up of a mighty nation among the Gentiles"; and 2) as the Lord's raising up of a "marvelous work among the Gentiles" (1 Nephi 22:6–12). The spiritual work coming unto and then from the Gentiles unto the house of Israel has to do, as also indicated, with the timely emergence of the "fulness of the gospel" (1 Nephi 22:8–12; 1 Nephi 10:14; 1 Nephi 15:13–17; 3 Nephi 16). Essentially, then, in the earlier Nephite writings we learn that the "grafting in" process is a coming to a knowledge of the Lord and his gospel by means of preaching from a Christ-centered record. Jacob (and apparently others before him) equates this gathering unto Christ with building on a sure cornerstone, the same that had been and was to be rejected. Further, the sacred texts used to invite souls unto Christ are often prepared by a process of grafting the prophecies of later prophets onto the the textual trunk of earlier prophets, the stick of Joseph, for instance, would both borrow from and be grafted into the stick of Judah (Ezekiel 37:19).

From the Nephite perspective, the Nephite record (Ezekiel's "stick of Joseph"), appears to be what Zenos may have meant when he said that the vineyard would be nourished again for the "last time" (34:19; Jacob 5:58). Jacob's words confirm this Nephite understanding: "And the day that he [Lord] shall set his hand again the second time to recover his people, is the day, yea even the last time, that the

servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard" (Jacob 6:2; 2 Nephi 6:14–15). Nephi, Jacob, and Zenos place the nourishing of the vineyard — a figure of speech having to do with preaching the "good word of God" — in context with the final gathering before the burning (Jacob 6:5–7). It is Lehi and Nephi who connect Zenos's statements infused with mixed imagery to the restoration of the Jews, which is the very starting point for Jacob's use of Zenos's allegory (Jacob 4:16–17). The chapters that frame Zenos's allegory (Jacob 4 and 6) specifically draw attention to the production of the record and to the importance of receiving it: "Behold [Jacob asks his future readers], will ye reject these words [that I write on the small plates]?" (Jacob 6:8). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that Zenos is the source (or one of them) for Nephi's (and Jacob's) statements about gathering and oneness that are woven together with the blended imagery of the vineyard earlier in the record.

Before concluding this phase of the argument, however, it would be beneficial to say a final word about the textual influences pressing in on Jacob's prologue to the allegory. In addition to tracing the image of the rock or stone to Psalm 118, Noel Reynolds has pointed out that Isaiah is another source for the building imagery preceding the vineyard allegory.[31] That allusion is significant because the "tried stone," the "precious corner stone, and sure foundation" on which to build again is referenced in a Isaianic prophecy that has restoration and apocalyptic implications (Isaiah 8:14; Isaiah 28:16; Genesis 49:22–26; Daniel and Doctrine and Covenants 65:2). Further, Isaiah 28 is used by Nephi in his great prophecy about the role of the Book of Mormon in convincing the Jews and Gentiles before the end that Jesus is the Christ (Isaiah 28:9–13; 2 Nephi 28:27–32). Here is Nephi's language in his great prophecy on the role of the record in the day of the Gentiles:

> Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more! And in fine, wo unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God! For behold, he that is **built upon the rock** receiveth it with gladness, and he that is **built upon a sandy foundation** trembleth lest he shall fall. Wo unto him that shall say: We have received the **word of God**, and we need no more of the **word of God**, for

31. Noel B. Reynolds, "Nephite Uses and Interpretations of Zenos," in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 41–42. Reynolds asserts that Zenos influences and clarifies Isaiah often in the Book of Mormon.

> we have enough! For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom. (2 Nephi 28:27–30)[32]

Here we may consider the rock to be the received word, and "receiving it with gladness" to include receiving *more* of the truth of God (more scripture) with gladness. The imagery in this passage is sufficient to demonstrate that to build their foundation, the Gentiles, according to Nephi (and Isaiah), would need to be open to receiving more of his word. That word that Nephi refers to is the Christ-centered record that he and others are preparing for future generations. The stone or rock on which to build is the testimony of Jesus Christ through a sacred record. Relatedly, the Psalmist writes, "The Lord . . . is become my salvation . . . for thou [O Lord] hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day of salvation the Lord has made; we will rejoice and be glad in it" (Psalm 118: 21–24).

Accordingly, the Lord confirms that his mercy "endureth forever" over those whom he has made covenant with (Psalm 118:1–4). As indicated, Jacob seems to have Isaiah and the Psalmist in mind when he introduces Zenos's allegory, but he never explicitly identifies the cornerstone on which the Jews and all others may build in a future generation. Indeed, Jacob never explicitly discusses the Jewish restoration after Jacob 4. In Jacob 6, however, he suggests that the sure foundation on which to build in a later generation is a knowledge of Christ in the "good word of God," by which all are nourished before the fires of judgment are sent to consume the bad branches that remain (Jacob 6:5–8). The cornerstone or rock then, it would seem, is a powerful record in the last days that would contain the knowledge of the Lord which, when carried forth by the servants of God, would propel forward his work and bring souls unto him. Through it, all would have a final opportunity to come unto him, as the allegory intimates. In that

32. This Book of Mormon passage about the reception of the Book of Mormon in the day of the Gentile borrows from Isaiah 28:10, 13, just three verses before Isaiah 28:16, where the Lord promises to "lay in Zion for a foundation a stone." Further, Isaiah 28:13 seems to allude to Isaiah 8:15, the prophecy concerning the Jewish rejection of Jesus. The intersection of these passages does not seem haphazard.

day, all might gather unto him if they would but hear his voice. In this way, the intricate imagery of Jacob 5 may be partially reconciled and accounted for.

Nephi's General Aesthetic

Zenos and other prophets such as Isaiah intentionally combine chronologies when communicating their multifaceted predictions. Readers expect to be challenged (if not occasionally confused) when reading their contributions to sacred writ. But what about Nephi and Jacob, they who delight in "plainness" (2 Nephi 25:1–8, 20, 28; 26:33; 31:1–3; 32:7; 33:5–6)? Nephi, student of Zenos and Isaiah, is, ironically, also explicitly synthetic in his aesthetic. Indeed, Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob share the tendency, as readers and writers, to associate images and connections together without explanation. The work of making meaning, in good Eastern fashion, then, is left to the reader. Laman and Lemuel, less spiritually minded than Nephi, and less inclined to search the scriptures or ask of God than their young brother, also found their father's words "hard to understand" (1 Nephi 17:1). There are many ways this pluralistic aesthetic of the prophets of old and of Nephi and Jacob registers with the modern reader as somewhat monolithic in the early part of the Book of Mormon. But this sense of plainness is a kind of blindness, much as ignorance of complexity is a form of bliss. In short, the Nephite record is more layered with imagery than it may seem.

The most direct route to making this point about Nephi's openness to a complex poetics of fusion is perhaps just to describe the dialogue between Nephi and his brothers after he had read to them from Isaiah (1 Nephi 22:1–3). On the occasion, Laman and Lemuel ask Nephi: "What meaneth these things of which you have read?" They then reveal themselves as categorizers, for they ask him: "Behold, are they [Isaiah's words] to be understood according to things which are spiritual, which shall come to pass according to the spirit and not the flesh [or in some other way]?" (1 Nephi 22:1). To which Nephi, gatherer of meanings, replies in so many words, "yes, it is both, and more." For Nephi, things temporal and spiritual are in reality spiritually one. They hold together in Christ and his work that has been purposed from the beginning. For Nephi, sacred time, "yesterday, today, and forever," is but "one eternal round" (1 Nephi 10:18–19). His brothers forgo effort while Nephi, through effort, has come to understand Zenos, Isaiah, and his father.

1 Nephi 15

After Lehi's dream and prophecy are recorded (1 Nephi 8; 10) and after Nephi's vision is rehearsed (1 Nephi 11–14), Nephi descends the mount and, as indicated, instructs his brethren who dispute the meaning of their father's teaching. Nephi records Lehi's prophecy in advance of explaining his own symbolic vision. What makes Lehi's prophecy so relevant is that his predictions about the Jews and Gentiles demonstrate again the fusion of imagery that is characteristic of Nephi's (and Jacob's) writings. In 1 Nephi 15:12–20, Nephi alludes to his father's earlier prophecy (1 Nephi 10) while explicitly mixing together the motifs that have been of interest in this study, all of which have a convergence in Christ or a Christ-centered record. Using the following significant passage, the familiar fusion of images can be identified and examined using three concepts that converge in Christ and the Nephite record. In the passage, among other things, Nephi explains to his confused brothers that according to the "covenant" a "knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer which was ministered unto their fathers by him" would come to them and the "house of Israel." As did Lehi, Nephi teaches these sacred truths using mixed imagery:

> And now, the thing which our father [Lehi] meaneth concerning the **grafting in** of the **natural branches** through the fulness of the Gentiles, is, that in the latter days, when **our seed** shall have dwindled in unbelief . . . then shall the fulness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles. . . .
>
> And at that day shall the remnant of **our seed** know . . . and come to a knowledge of their forefathers, and also to a knowledge of the gospel of their Redeemer, which was ministered unto their fathers [3 Nephi];[33] wherefore, they [Israel] shall come to a knowledge of their Redeemer and the very points of his doctrine, that they may know how to come unto him and be saved.[34]

33. Nephi seems to add this detail in because of his visionary experience, since it does not appear that Lehi was aware of Jesus's destined ministry among his seed. That is something Nephi learned in his vision. Indeed, it was central to his vision's meaning (1 Nephi 11:7; 1 Nephi 12:6).
34. This detail also seems to be borrowed from his visionary experience. Notice that Nephi is not explaining to his brethren Lehi's dream, but his words of prophecy as recorded in 1 Nephi 10. He eventually expounds on the symbols from Lehi's dream, but here he speaks of Lehi's sermon and prophecy in conjunction with his own visionary experience.

> And then at that day will they not rejoice and give praise unto their everlasting God, **their rock** and their salvation [1 Nephi 13:36]?[35] Yea, at that day will they not receive the strength and **nourishment** from the **true vine** [Christ]?[36] Yea, will they not come unto the **true fold of God**?
>
> Behold, I say unto you, Yea; they [Jews] shall be remembered again among the house of Israel; they shall be **grafted in**, being a **natural branch** of the **true olive tree**. (1 Nephi 15:12–17)

This interfused passage clearly brings together in an organically organized collage the same three metaphoric details that are of interest to this presentation in context with the Nephite record. The record is equated with a sure knowledge of "their rock" and his "gospel." All images in the foregoing, however, have a common relationship to a Christ-centered record (and therefore to Christ and his gospel doctrine and its effects) that can be equated to the cornerstone or rock referenced in Psalm 118:22; Isaiah 28:16; and in Jacob 4:16–17.[37] It should be remembered that Lehi, as first accommodated to us by Nephi in 1 Nephi 10, introduced us to the phrase, "grafted in." There, Lehi explained that to be "grafted in" from his point of view (if not Zenos's) meant to "come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer" (1 Nephi 10:14). This introduction to messianic and redemptive knowledge would only come after "the Gentiles

35. Here we learn that the house of Israel will build on the rock who is Christ when they receive a record from the fathers. This is the answer to Jacob's question that Zenos's allegory is supposed to demonstrate. It is not straightforward, however, that Jacob 5 is about the Jews building on the rock by means of a record.
36. Notice that "nourishment," a word that most likely derives from Zenos's account (one that later Alma also borrows from the small plates account of Zenos in Alma 32:36–43), refers to that which comes by means of the word of God as recorded by the Nephite fathers.
37. The gospel is often equated with a stone (Daniel 2:35, 45; see Doctrine and Covenants 65:2). In reference to these prophecies, it may be interesting to observe that Joseph Smith received the plates from the angel Moroni on September 22, 1823. They were taken from the hill by the angel and "delivered . . . up to [Joseph Smith]" (Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith). The plates lay in a stone box where also were found stones or interpreters fastened to a breastplate. The ability of a metallic record to preserve through centuries of time special knowledge makes rock a fitting physical element to compare such a record to. The Book of Mormon's coming forth from out of the hillside is evidence that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

had received the fulness of the Gospel," a phrase that is defined in 1 Nephi 15 and associated with a Christ-centered record (1 Nephi 10:14; 3 Nephi 16:4–15).

It is no surprise, then, that Nephi concludes his lesson with a reference to the power that would be manifest to the Jews and Gentiles. Nephi predicts that the Lehite remnant of Israel would not be grafted in, "until after they are scattered [and nursed or nourished] by the Gentiles." Nephi points out that as the Jews rejected Jesus for manifesting his power unto the Gentiles (1 Nephi 15:17), even so will he again manifest his power unto the Gentiles to gather his scattered sheep of Israel into the "true fold of God." This would take place when they would be nourished by a new revelation in which would resonate the voice of the Good Shepherd. The record containing a sure knowledge of the Redeemer would come to the Gentiles, and from them it would go unto all Israel. Jesus confirms this early Nephite teaching when he comes among his Lehite remnant, as Nephi suggested he would (1 Nephi 15:14; 3 Nephi 15–16). Accordingly, Nephi gives us an account that conflates Zenos's imagery of the vineyard with the imagery indicative of the sheepfold and the emergence of a record containing the "fulness of the gospel" and the sure knowledge of the Redeemer, "their rock and their salvation" (1 Nephi 15:15). If this poetics of fusion appears in 1 Nephi 15, then it may also appear later on. The pattern appears in many places.[38] My interest in this study, however, is ultimately how these three prophetic images collect (directly or indirectly) in and around the second half of Jacob 5 and how it is that they are connected with the book since published as the Book of Mormon.

After quoting two chapters of Isaiah (1 Nephi 20–21; Isaiah 48–49), Nephi ends his first book with the same mixture of images and thematic emphases as before. In 1 Nephi 22, readers are reminded by Nephi, and pointedly, that the house of Israel has been "led away . . . and scattered to and fro" as sheep having no Shepherd (1 Nephi 22:3–12). They have become "lost from the knowledge" of their family

38. This note mentions three in passing on to Jacob 5 where the convergence is also broadly apparent: 1) the pattern may be found in 2 Nephi 6–10; 2) it may be found in Doctrine and Covenants, Section 45; and 3) it may be found in the well-known correspondence from Joseph Smith to a Mr. Saxon in 1833. Richard C. Galbraith, *Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993), 19–25; see also Smith, Letter to Noah C. Saxton. In each of these examples of fusion, textual evidence can be pointed to confirming the relationship between the images and details this analysis tracks.

members (1 Nephi 22:4). Nevertheless, Nephi says, the Gentiles would be commissioned to "nurse . . ." or "nourish . . ." them "temporal[ly] and spiritual[ly]" (1 Nephi 22:3, 6–12). The scattered flock would also be "confounded" or mixed through intermarriage. However, the "Lord God [would] proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles, which [would] be of great worth" unto all people (1 Nephi 22:8). According to Nephi, Isaiah did liken this "marvelous work among the Gentiles" and its effects to the sheep being "nourished by the Gentiles," and, like the recovered sheep, being "carried in their arms and upon their shoulders" (1 Nephi 22:8). These lost sheep of the house of Israel among the nations would be brought "out of obscurity and out of darkness," when "they shall know that the Lord is their Savior and their Redeemer, the Mighty One of Israel." This would occur *before* the burning of the vineyard (1 Nephi 22:12).

Those hungry persons who would "hear" the voice of the Good Shepherd in and through the Nephite record before the burning (1 Nephi 22:20–21) are referred to by Nephi in this tender image, which also acts as a summary for the material found in 1 Nephi 19–22:

> And the Lord shall **surely prepare a way** for his people. . . .
>
> And he gathereth his children from the four quarters of the earth; **and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd; and he shall feed his sheep, and in him they shall find pasture**. . . .
>
> For they **dwell in righteousness**. . . . [and] **shall dwell safely** in the Holy One of Israel if it so be that they shall repent.

As indicated, 1 Nephi gathers together into a coherent presentation three strains of biblical imagery. In 1 Nephi, Nephi, expounding his father's use of Zenos's allegory, employs vineyard details to get at concepts such as grafting, nourishing, and burning. Nephi also delivers to his reader, though not to the same degree, images associated with the sheepfold. For him, as suggested, "scattering" is a word that may apply to olive tree branches or stray sheep, both of which figuratively represent the condition of people. In 1 Nephi 22, Nephi uses the term scattered in reference to sheep or people gathered into the covenant and Church, the true fold of God. The "fulness of the Gospel among the Gentiles," the "marvelous work among the Gentiles" that would, when preached by the empowered servants of God, gather together

the branches or sheep before the burning of the vineyard arguably is a book that conveys the knowledge of Christ and his gospel covenant. The Nephite record (both the small plates and the overall anticipated record) is variously described by Nephi as a rod of iron (1 Nephi 15:23–25) or stone or rock (1 Nephi 13:36), but those metaphors are used to convey the gospel message's reliability and strength and the reliability and strength of the words of the central figure in the plan of redemption, Jesus Christ (Doctrine and Covenants 18:2–5; Doctrine and Covenants 65:2).

The tryptic images of vineyard, sheepfold, and cornerstone come together rather easily if it is remembered that they all have a correspondence to Christ, who is the Good Shepherd, his sacred words (or familiar voice), and his eschatological work of gathering his sheep to pastures where they might dwell safely before, during, and after he comes in fire and glory.

Two Possible Intertextual Connections

There are two intertextual connections that seem to bear on Jacob 4:16–17 and, thus, on Jacob 4–6. The first intertextual connection can be found in 2 Nephi 25 at the onset of Nephi's final great prophecy about the reception of the Nephite record by Jew and Gentile, and the other intertextual connection appears later in 3 Nephi 27 shortly after Jesus has taught the Nephites about the role of their records in future generations among both Jew and Gentile. The 3 Nephi 27 passage comes on the heels of Jesus's two-day sermon to the seed of Lehi, much of which has centered on the latter-day reception of the Nephite record and the Jewish restoration.

Potential intertextual reference 1 (2 Nephi 25)

In 2 Nephi 25, Nephi points the latter-day Jews to "Jesus Christ" and seeks to convince them that their long-awaited Messiah is Christ and that they are to believe in him (25:19–20). The chapter starts out with the history of the Jews and then squarely focuses the reader on the name of Jesus Christ. This name is not made known in the Book of Mormon until this chapter. Nephi indicates that the Jews will be recovered (25:17; Isaiah 11:11) when they begin to believe in him through the Nephite record. As argued elsewhere, Nephi likens this event—the second recovery of the Jews—to the raising up of the brass serpent and the smiting of the nourishing rock in the wilderness, which miraculous symbols (serpent and rock) and events (healing and nourishment)

are types of Christ and his mighty works. "[A]s these things are true," Nephi says, so will the record he prepares become instrumental in restoring the Jews to a knowledge of Christ. Thus, for Nephi, and later, Jacob, Christ is the Rock of Salvation, but he is to be made manifest to the Jews in and through a record that speaks again in plainness of him and his gospel. The book then is the physical vehicle for the good word of the Rock of Salvation and, in that sense, is itself a testament or sure stone on which the Jews may build a safe foundation before the coming of the Lord. This appears to be Jacob's conclusion as he emphasizes the "good word of God [Christ]" or "these words" at the end of his commentary on the allegory (Jacob 6:7–8).

What makes this point even more significant is that Jacob 4, the introduction to the allegory, appears to parallel and even allude to 2 Nephi 25, and suggests that the Jews who "rejected" Christ would be established "on his name" after they received the Nephite writings or "these things" (2 Nephi 25:13–14, 18, 16, Jacob 6:5, 11). There are at least six parallels that one can find between 2 Nephi 25 and Jacob 4 that make this connection plausible.

1. Both 2 Nephi 25 and Jacob 4 recount the same Jewish history and are framed around the law and the prophets.
2. Both chapters appear to address the question of Jewish restoration. Jacob 4 asks how it is possible that the Jews will ever rebuild on the stone they once rejected. 2 Nephi 25, as does Jacob 5, illustrates and explains just how: they will come to a knowledge of Christ and begin to believe in him and his gospel by means of a book of Nephite scripture. The record will be the instrument to assist the Jews to learn of Christ and to enter into covenant with him.
3. Both chapters seem to link a nourishing "rock" or "stone" to the recovery of the Jews after their rejection of him in the day he "manifested himself unto them in the flesh" (2 Nephi 25:12, 14, 17–21). Even as the Lord anciently smote the rock and water gushed forth to nourish and sustain his people while they sojourned, so in a latter day will they find refreshment from the gospel of "Jesus Christ" as articulated in a physical record that emphatically testifies of the Rock of Salvation (25:20). Hence, Nephi says after comparing his record to the rock Moses smote, "Wherefore, *for this cause* hath the Lord promised unto me that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved" (25:21;

see also Alma 37:14, 18–19). This statement is preceded by Nephi explaining this: "Wherefore, he [the Lord] shall bring forth his words unto them [the children of those who rejected their Messiah], at the last day" (2 Nephi 25:18). "[R]ejected" is the word used by both Nephi and Jacob in their accounts (25:18; Jacob 4:15, 17). Through the revealed record, many of these children will be persuaded to believe "on his name" (2 Nephi 25:13–14). Accordingly, if the record is not a rock itself, it certainly contains an important witness of the Rock himself. Through the Nephite record, the children of the Jews will be persuaded to "believe in Christ" (25:16–29), or more to the point, to "believe *on* his name" (25:13–14). The word "on" in this parallel context conjures up Jacob's use of the word "up*on*" in the relevant passage from Jacob 4. In Nephi's account, those who believe "on his name" appear to be those of "his church" (2 Nephi 25:14).

4. Both chapters share either rare or otherwise characteristic phrases and concepts that suggest that the later chapter (Jacob 4) may allude to the former (2 Nephi 25): "believe on Christ" and "believe in Christ" (instances of these phrases and other variant phrases are many) = "believed in Christ" (see also 2 Nephi 6:14 and 10:2, 7, 14); "we labor diligently to write" (2 Nephi 25:23) = "we labor diligently to engraven" (Jacob 4:3) (this phrase is only found in these two chapters); "be reconciled to God" (2 Nephi 25:23) = "be reconciled unto him" (Jacob 4:11) (see also 2 Nephi 10:24); "they shall *believe in Christ and worship the Father in his name*" (2 Nephi 25:16) = "Behold, they *believed in Christ and worshiped the Father in his name*" (Jacob 4:5) (this phrase is only found in these two chapters); and "it is *by grace* that we are saved after all we can *do*" (2 Nephi 25:23) = "it is *by his grace*, and his great condescension unto the children of men, that we have power to *do* these things" [i.e., to engrave the Nephite record] (Jacob 4:7).[39] Furthermore, both chapters speak of the manifestation of

39. Here, I only desire to demonstrate similarities in syntax between the two chapters to make my point. It is not the purview of this study to take up a rereading of the famous phrase of Nephi, "It is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23).

the Lord "in the flesh" (2 Nephi 25:12; Jacob 4:11) and the "atonement" of Christ (2 Nephi 25:16; Jacob 4:11–12).

5. Both chapters seem to speak directly of the coming forth of the Nephite record and each chapter frequently uses the name of "Christ" (2 Nephi 25:23, 26; Jacob 4:1–7).
6. Both chapters share secondary imagery such as that associated with the brass serpent (2 Nephi 25:20; Jacob 4:14). For instance, both chapters speak of the importance of "look[ing] forward" to Christ without missing that "mark" (2 Nephi 25:16–30; Jacob 4:14). Incidentally, 2 Nephi 25:20 acts as yet another example of how the prophets combine imagery without explanation. Nephi associates the serpent and the rock on the grounds that they are both manifestations of how the Lord worked through Moses to show forth his power unto his people to deliver and sustain them. Never mind that these events have little relationship otherwise. The serpent is lively and sinuous; the rock is immovable and enduring.

Potential intertextual reference 2 (3 Nephi 27)

In addition to linking 2 Nephi 25 with Jacob 4, there is one other point to be made here. The gospel of Christ (or doctrine of Christ) is often compared directly or indirectly in scripture by the Lord himself to a rock on which to build a foundation (3 Nephi 11:39–40; 14:24–27; 18:12–13; 27:8–26; Doctrine and Covenants 6:26, 34; Doctrine and Covenants 18:3–5; Doctrine and Covenants 11:16, 24, 33:12–13). So, while referred to as our Rock, he often wants to define his gospel as our rock, especially in modern scripture. As he teaches the gospel in 3 Nephi 27, it is interlaced with a phrase pertaining to the symbol of the vineyard that originates with Jacob 5. The distinct phrase is this: "hewn down and cast into the fire." It is first found and thereafter frequently repeated in Zenos's allegory and Jacob's commentary on the allegory (Jacob 5:42, 44, 46 and Jacob 6:7). The phrase is later used in Alma 5:35, 52, 56 in context with the Good Shepherd. It can also be found in Helaman 14:18; 3 Nephi 14:19, 27:11, 12, 17, and Mormon 8:21. Its triple use in 3 Nephi 27 seems to connect it to Alma's teachings to Zarahemla if not the allegory itself. Alma borrows this fairly uncommon phrase from the allegory.

One could quote 3 Nephi 27 at length to demonstrate the consistency of the theme of building on the gospel rock in the Book of

Mormon. In 3 Nephi 27, the twelve Nephite disciples ask Jesus for help with the name of his church. He points them to the scriptures, and then adds this significant teaching and prophecy in context with the coming forth of scriptural records:

> And how can it be my church save it be called in my name? . . . but if it is called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that it is **built upon my gospel**. Verily I say unto you, that ye are **built upon my gospel**. . . . And if it so be that the church is **built upon my gospel** then will the Father show forth his own works in it.
>
> But if it is not **built upon my gospel**, and is **built upon** the works of men, or **upon the** works of the devil, verily I say unto you they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are *hewn down and cast into the fire*, from whence there is no return. For their works do follow them, for it is because of their works that they are *hewn down*; therefore remember the things that I have told you.
>
> Behold I have given unto you **my gospel**, and this is **the gospel** I have given unto you — that. . . . after that I had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me.[40] . . . And for this cause have I been lifted up; therefore, according to the power of the Father I will draw all men unto me, that they may be judged according to their works.
>
> And it shall come to pass, that whoso **repenteth** and **is baptized** in my name **shall be filled** [with the Holy Ghost]; and if he **endureth unto the end**, behold, him will I hold guiltless before my Father at that day when I stand to judge the world. And he that **endureth not unto the end**, the same is he that is also *hewn down and cast into the fire*, from whence they can no more return, because of the justice of the Father.
>
> And this is the word which he hath given unto the children

40. The rare phrase "draw all men unto me" appears only one other place in the Book of Mormon. There, it is rendered, "draw all men unto him" (2 Nephi 26:24). This is significant for two reasons: first, 2 Nephi 26 is a chapter about the coming forth of the Nephite record in a day of Gentile darkness; and second, we learn about how it is that the Lord will draw all unto him in that day of darkness: "He hath commanded his people that they should persuade all me to repentance" (3 Nephi 27:20–21).

> of men. And for this cause he fulfilleth the words which he hath given, and he lieth not, but fulfilleth all his words. (3 Nephi 27:8–18)

This important text alluding to imagery from Jacob 5 is followed by Jesus not only reviewing his gospel (27:19–20) but commanding his twelve Nephite Disciples again to "Write the things which ye have seen and heard, save it be those which are forbidden," so that later generations will have a gospel record of his time and teachings among the Lehites whereby they may be judged: "For out of the books which *have been written*, and which *shall be written*, shall this people be judged, for by them shall their works be known unto men" (27:25).

Accordingly, by means of Zenos's allegory Jacob appears to refer indirectly to his people's record that would in a future time period center on Christ and his gospel and would be instrumental in restoring the Jews (and others) unto him whom they had rejected. Thus, they might build upon that sure foundation before the fires predicted to accompany the Second Coming. This rejection, as demonstrated, apparently occurred because they, like their fathers before them, rejected "words of plainness" and sought elsewhere for "things they could not understand" (Jacob 4:14). This quest for things they could not comprehend led them into a state of "blindness," much as the later Gentiles would for a somewhat different reason, suffer from an "awful state of blindness" when they would also "stumble" at the word of God once it lost its pure form (1 Nephi 13:29, 32).

The pre-exilic Jews "despis[ing] the words of plainness" (Jacob 4:14) went beyond those words of truth to search for things they ultimately could not understand. This and other factors seem to have caused them to fall anciently (600 BC) and again in the first century (70 AD). Zenos's allegory, and Jacob's final commentary on the same in Jacob 6, suggest that the servants of the Lord who labor with him to "draw all men unto [him]" carry forth the nourishing word of the gospel in the Nephite record as prophesied by the Lord himself in 3 Nephi 27 (see also 1 Nephi 13:35–37), a chapter that intersects with characteristic language and imagery from Jacob 5. Using it, his servants would seek to persuade the Jews scattered throughout the vineyard to come unto Christ and believe in him. Further, they would invite all unto repentance and baptism for the receipt of the Holy Ghost. This reading of Jacob 4:15–17, as indicated, becomes more reasonable when we consider what Nephi does in 2 Nephi 25 (the first part of his final prophecy on the role of the Nephite record in the day of the Gentiles) in connection

with what his brother writes in Jacob 4:16–17 and 6, the framing for the allegory.

Concerning intertextual references

As stated, Jacob 4 likely borrows in many ways from 2 Nephi 25, and that 3 Nephi 27 likely borrows from Jacob 5, indicating that Jacob has in mind the coming forth of the Nephite record when he asks, "how it is possible that these, after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner" (4:17)?

It has been explained that 2 Nephi 25, where Nephi invites the Jews to believe on Jesus Christ, is the Nephite answer to and enactment of Jacob's very question and prophetically predicted process. It provides a solution to the question that grew from Isaiah 8's prediction of the Jewish rejection of Christ. We have seen that the answer to "this mystery" of restoration *after* the Jewish rejection was to be disclosed by Jacob if he himself did not stumble because of his anxiety. The solution appears to be connected with the coming forth of a sacred record that would convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ and that they are to come unto him, repent, and be baptized that they might receive the Holy Ghost. Because of the Nephite record, itself containing the gospel and rock, the Jews would believe in Christ and gather with the covenant people, which would enable them to build a safe spiritual foundation, for it is only in and through him that any person can be saved (2 Nephi 25:20).

In 3 Nephi 27, this reading of Jacob 4 appears to be confirmed, since Jesus himself speaks of his gospel there as revealed in the record that is the rock on which men and women should build. Indeed, his church is to be built on that rock, according to him. As explained, this reading is consistent with several modern scriptures (Doctrine and Covenants 1:17–18, 29–30; 6:26, 34; 10:52–53, 62–63, 67–69; 11:16, 24; 18:1–5; 33:11–15). The symbol of the rock has meant many things over the years, including Jehovah, revelation, and the gospel word. The Nephite record would allow Jesus to draw willing men and women unto him in a future day before the end. Both Zenos and Jacob simply help us appreciate that this would occur when his servants go forth with the Nephite record (3 Nephi 20:29–42; see also 21:26–22:14; 23:5). By it they will nourish and prune the vineyard with the "good word of God" (Jacob 6:7).

Conclusion

Although Jacob seems to refer to a book when he introduces Zenos's allegory, the interest here is the three metaphorical images that seem to run through Nephi's and Jacob's words before indirectly gathering in the second half of the dramatic allegory shaped as tragicomedy. The stone or rock foundation is just one of three images, albeit one that plays a significant part in this presentation. So, though the stone is not directly mentioned in Jacob 5 per se, it is the symbol the allegory grows out of, and thus may be said to illustrate. The three metaphorical images — the vineyard, the Shepherd and sheepfold, and the cornerstone or rock foundation on which to build a structure — and their flexible metaphoric and theologic application ultimately derives from the Brass Plates in the possession of the early Nephite prophets. Establishing the relationship of the above images has been primary to this project that ultimately seeks to perform a literary reading of Jacob 5. The second half of Jacob 5 serves as a figurative scene of reconciliation to the Lord of the vineyard and a figurative picture of restoration before the winter cold encroaches and the unproductive branches must be bound and burned. The ending, like any good religious comedy, gathers all things into one and leaves us not without further questions but with a general sense of closure, completeness, happiness, and hope.

This study demonstrates that the early Book of Mormon, like the Bible (and even other less sacred works of literature), employs a trio of images in a way that corresponds to prophecy. As indicated, fused metaphor is common not only to Old Testament prophecy but to the prophetic writings of the Nephite record. In particular, Nephi and Jacob appear to use the vineyard, the sheepfold, and the cornerstone to teach about the latter-day gathering and fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant. This series of metaphoric images can be found culminating in the second half of Zenos's allegory and in earlier parts of the record. Understanding the adaptability of scriptural imagery makes this claim plausible. Jacob introduces the allegory by referencing at least two types of prophecies. The first, has to do with the rejection of the words of Christ and Christ up until the first century. In that same passage of scripture (subsequent to it), Jacob suggests that in a latter-day another foundation would be miraculously established. This later foundation would be comparable to the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ as contained in the Nephite record. Zenos's allegory demonstrates that the Gentile servants of the master of the vineyard would

carry forth this record (or its equivalent) unto the children of the house of Israel, including the Jews. They would, upon hearing the record's Christocentric message preached to them, come unto a knowledge of Christ. They would believe on him, repent, and be baptized that they might enter into covenant with him. And the promise is "he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16).

All this is according to ancient scripture, as Nephi and Jacob knew. This passage from the Doctrine and Covenants helpfully expresses the ancient prophetic sentiment, but in a revelation from the Lord through the Prophet, Joseph Smith, the translator of the Book of Mormon:

> My work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the **knowledge of a Savior** has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the **knowledge of a Savior** come unto my people [Jews and others]. . . .
>
> And **for this very purpose** are these plates preserved, which contain these records—that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people [Jews and others]. (Doctrine and Covenants 3:16, 19)

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