

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 1, Lecture 25

Jacob 5–7; Enos

The Olive Tree; The Challenge of Sherem

In the fourth chapter of Jacob he rings the gong in verses 13 and 14. What he is talking about here is absolutely basic. Notice that verse 13 is one philosophy of life, and verse 14 is the other philosophy of life. They are beautifully brought into contrast in the opening lines of *Faust*. Would somebody tell us who Faust was? He simply spooked the whole mentality of the Western World in the sixteenth century. Some say he invented printing. Dr. Faust was the great magician of the sixteenth century, the most learned man of this time. Of course, he is the subject of the greatest play ever written in German, Goethe's *Faust*. But here's what we have. He contrasts the two lines here. Notice, in verse 13 Jacob says, You lunkheads. He is trying to get through to them. He says, Can't you see what I'm talking about is real? Notice the words he uses: "For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are [if they are true], and of things as they really will be [he keeps repeating that, and they are plain]; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls." There's no reason why you should fight them. We are not the only witnesses; the prophets are too, he says.

Then in the next verse he says the Jews wouldn't settle for that. They were too smart; they didn't want it that way. They didn't want plainness. He says they are "looking beyond the mark." They have to be smart and intellectual. It can't be as simple as all that, so that's the way Faust puts it. In the opening lines of the play he says, "I've studied everything." Then he goes on, "I'm the most famous man of my time. I know everything; I've studied everything. I've got to the depths of all the sciences and everything. Then here I am, poor old fool, and don't know any more than I ever knew before. So I've committed myself to magic; I'm going to take up magic studies now, that through the power of the spirit and revelation I might know the meaning of many secrets. That I don't need to say with sour sweat a lot of things that I don't know to move my students all the time. That I might know what really holds the universe together." The answer to that question we still don't know. We still don't know what the power is that holds the universe together. Gravitation is a complete mystery today, as it ever was. He finally decides to commit suicide, and what stops him is that Satan comes in and says, "I'll give you what you want." So he makes a pact with Satan, and the play goes on. But that takes us to the Pearl of Great Price. We won't go into that. But notice that this is absolutely basic. Here are two final solutions. They won't settle for the spiritual one, and Jacob said that's the way things really are. Well, how are we going to know it? If you start looking in the other direction, you will look forever because all scientific tests are tentative anyway. But that's the way they wanted it and, of course, they stumble. They'll always stumble on these things. But then he says, How do you think these crazy people will ever be [accepted by] the headstone of the corner? How is God ever going to build on them? he says. Well, surprise, surprise, I'm going to tell you, he says, in verse 18, "I will unfold this mystery unto you; if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit" and get carried away by these things. He gets carried away in the olive tree story here. We can save some trouble with this story on the olive. As I said, it goes on for seventy-seven verses.

This is information on the olive culture. Joseph Smith was a farmer, but he didn't have an olive farm. It was believed in his day and mine too that olives would not grow out of sight of the Mediterranean—they had to grow on the Mediterranean shores. The olive culture is a very specialized thing, and it is described here in full detail—how to take care of olive trees and the peculiar nature of the olive tree, as the man says here. Of course, in the Book of Mormon there's no sign of olive cultivation in the New World. The olive tree [allegory] is taken from Zenos. He has taken from the prophet Zenos who lived way back between Moses and Elijah. He was an old prophet whose works were lost, but around 1906 the works of Zenos were discovered in the *Pseudo Philo*.

So here we go. First of all, this olive culture should be mentioned because this is good as an indication of reliability of the Book of Mormon. Nobody knew much about that then. Zenos' treatise on ancient olive culture, Jacob 5–6, is accurate in every detail. Olive trees do have to be pruned and cultivated diligently. The miracle of the olive tree is that it can't be killed. There are olive trees three thousand years old. The original olive trees are supposedly still in the Garden of Gethsemane. Whether that was the Garden of Gethsemane [in Jerusalem] or not, the olive trees are still there in Athens. You can cut down an olive tree until nothing is left, and the shoots will start coming out persistently. It's the source of life for the Mediterranean people. It supplies the oil. Everything is cooked in olive oil; it's nourishing in its own right. They didn't have soap. Soap was invented by the Saxons, so they always rubbed oil all over themselves and then scraped it off. That was the way to clean your pores, etc. They used it for everything. Remember our friend Solon, a contemporary of Lehi, was in the olive oil business. It's a great thing. That's why it is the Greek symbol of Athens—it's immortal, it springs up forever, etc. I grew up amid hundreds of acres of olives. Our house was right in the middle of an olive grove. They were harvested and made very high quality olives, but they had to be treated like this. Olive trees do have to be pruned and cultivated diligently. The top branches, as Jacob tells us, are the first to wither. The new shoots do come right out of the trunk. The olive is indeed the most plastic of trees, surpassing even the willow in its power to survive the most drastic whacking and burning. After a city had been destroyed, the one thing that would survive would be the olive trees. They could start life again as long as the olive was there.

Question: It speaks of the lord of the *vineyard*, and olives are trees.

Answer: A very good point; I'm glad you brought that up. Strange you should ask. I'm going to tell you pretty soon.

A good olive tree is greatly cherished. Notice he cherishes them and weeps about olive trees. A tree can be just like a pet because the quality of one olive tree isn't the same as another. When you have a good one you stick to it and do anything to keep it from dying out, deteriorating, and withering. No end of pains are taken to preserve, even through many centuries. Really superior fruit is very rare and difficult to obtain and perpetuate. The ancient way of strengthening the old trees, especially in Greece, was to graft in the shoots of the oleaster, which was the wild olive. All over the valley here, you'll notice, the one tree that grows everywhere is the Russian olive. You know these grayish trees? They [the pioneers] brought them in for shade, but they just grow wild everywhere. They don't bear olives, of course. They call them Russian olives because they belong to the family of the olives, and their leaves are just like olives. But they grow wild—too wild as a matter of fact. So you have to graft in the shoots of the oleaster, the wild olive. Also shoots from valuable old trees are transplanted. Another thing is that it will not only grow

up just like that if you whack it off, but also it is the easiest tree in the world to graft. You just have to stick a branch into it and it's growing. It's an amazing tree. Too much grafting produces a nondescript and cluttered yield of fruit, as we find in Jacob's story. The top branches, if allowed to grow up—as in Spain and France where they plant them along the road and use them for shade among other things—while producing a good shade tree (they form that way) will indeed sap the strength of the tree and give a poor crop. Fertilizing with dung is very important (he uses that word *dung* a number of times here) in spite of the preference for rocky ground, and has been practiced since ancient times. You notice, to the master's surprise, in the poorest ground it grows very well. The thing to be most guarded against is the bitterness of the fruit. That's why you soak it in brine for so long. All of these points, taken from a treatise on ancient olive culture, are duly, though quite casually, noted in Zenos's Parable of the Olive Tree.

So here we have a real olive tree going on here. He talks about it, and, as you said, what about this? Well, you see the nature of the olive tree is best to compare with this. You can cut, you can spread it, you can scatter it, you can try to destroy it. In parts where it became inferior, then all of a sudden it improved later on. Another part that was very superior suddenly and surprisingly started giving bitter fruit. This will happen. It will fool you an awful lot. So this is sort of a complex ethnical figure in the New World. This is Abraham's seed among all the inhabitants of the earth, mixed in all together. So Zenos spoke of the house of Israel. "Hearken, O ye house of Israel, and hear the word of me, a prophet of the Lord. For behold, thus saith the Lord, I will liken thee, O house of Israel like unto a tame olive-tree, which a man took and nourished in his vineyard; and it grew, and waxed old, and began to decay." So we go down the list here. He pruned it. You can list the number of operations that take place; there are quite a number. There's not as much duplication as you think. And you may think of the laborious, boring style here. Remember, Jacob apologizes for being carried away in his style, etc. This long thing wouldn't bore an ancient audience, necessarily, but it's a display of Jacob's own versatility. For example, a classic subject of disputation in the schools of rhetoric, especially in ancient Babylon and also in Greece, was a debate between trees. The olive tree would debate with the vine as to which was superior, and this would go on and on and on. They could go on all day; they never got tired of this stuff. Terence and Galbungus are supposed to have debated for fourteen days and nights on whether *ego* has a vocative case.

We proceed here with the grafting on the branches and the like, and the various things you can do with the olive tree. There are other writings like this that you could compare with it for style. And you ask this question when you look at it here: How does it describe the condition of the world today? You'll find that description in here too. I mentioned before those four chapters, 14–17, in John where he is talking about the relationship of the Father, the Son, the apostles, and the people to whom the apostles would preach—and also the world comes in. He goes over and over and over it again. He seems to be repeating, but he isn't exactly repeating. All those four chapters are taken up with just that. There are hundreds and hundreds of prepositions tied together by nouns, and also the pronouns: I and me, me and thee, thee and them, etc. In one chapter I think there are over 200 of those personal pronouns. That's the same sort of thing. You'd think John would get tired and worn out talking like that, but he knew exactly what he was talking about and made it very clear. He had to rub it in too.

Well, this [Jacob 5] goes on with various things. There's this thing about the garden. I mentioned that it [the olive tree] prefers the rocky land. The karst of the Dalmatian Coast is absolutely bare rock where the soil has been washed away. It was timbered once upon a

time. Anciently, the timber was all cut down, and the soil was all washed away. That happens when you cut them down; you lose them forever. But the whole coast of Dalmatia is olive groves, and between the olive trees are the vines growing. The word *kerem* is the word for *olive grove* in its oldest occurrence when it appears in the book of Judges 15:5. But in the rest of the Bible it means *a vineyard*. In [Ezra 7:22 and in Isaiah 27:2] they sometimes use the expression *kerem ḥemer*. Isaiah used *kerem ḥemer*, which is very interesting because *ḥemer* isn't the Hebrew word for *grapes* or *vines*. It's the Arabic word (*khamr*) for *grapes*, *vines*, and *wine*. *Yayin* is the Hebrew word whence the Greeks get *oinos*, and we get our *wine*. Latin *vinum* and *wine* because the grapes did come from the Middle East. Palestine is the home of the vine, as well as the olive; they go together. There's the very famous poem by Ovid about the olive and the vine—how the vine clings to the olive and grows up around it, etc. The wedding of the olive and the vine is a classic theme. But here the word actually means either one. It means a *vineyard* or it means *an olive grove*, and they grew together. So when you see *kerem* in the Old Testament, you can translate it as either one. That's exactly what Jacob has done here. Of course, he was not a cultivator; he was born after the family left home. He had probably never seen grapes growing, unless it was wild grapes down in the Qara Mountains. I doubt that. But he is talking in terms of the scriptures because he says he is quoting Zenos; he is taking his story from Zenos. It's not his own experience at all. This is a very old story, and in very old times, before the days of Isaiah, they called it a *kerem ḥemer*. And *ḥemer* (*khamr*) is the Arabic word for *wine*, as against *yayin*, our [the Hebrew] word for *wine*. So it is very old, and you can use *garden* or *orchard* (it's six of one and half a dozen of the other).

He talks about preserving the roots and about transplanting here. Then he goes on about improvement of the crop in verse 17. The roots assert themselves, as they will—they'll catch on (verse 18). It's marvelous that they can grow in that rocky soil. They bring forth tame fruit, and then there's a problem of storage, "I shall lay up against the season, unto mine own self." It's like wine; the rarer vintage you keep. If it's particularly good, they'll say, "Up at Sunen the olives are particularly good this year, so this is a good year." Sometimes it's a bad one. It's the same thing with wine, as we all know. I'm sure we're experts on wine [laughter]. They go to the "nethermost part of the vineyard," and then there's the harvest where they hid the natural branches of the tree. There are very interesting discourses on this by Galen, the doctor. They would tie rocks from the branches so they would grow low and be easy to harvest. The classic way is to whack the tree with long poles and then catch the olives in a canvas; that's the way they did. But they would do these tricks and make the tree grow as low as possible so they could reach as much fruit as [possible]. But Galen gave a different explanation, a very amusing one.

Verse 21: "How comest thou hither to plant this tree, or this branch of the tree? For behold, it was the poorest spot in all the land of thy vineyard." Notice, in the poorest spot. Here was experimental planting; you do that all the time. You have to try things because you never know what's going to happen. "And the Lord of the vineyard said unto him: Counsel me not; I knew that it was a poor spot of ground. . . . And thou knowest that this spot of ground was poorer than the first." He not only let it grow there, but he planted it in even poorer, marginal ground. He was determined on expansion, and it brought forth much fruit. He wanted to expand his enterprise. (It's almost like the stock market; you can play around with olives and do things like that.) Another branch also brought forth fruit. You can lose all, and you can gain all. Notice that he talks about the hybrids here in verse 25: "Behold, this have I planted in a good spot of ground; and I have nourished it this long time, and only a part of the tree hath brought forth tame fruit, and the other

part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit.” Well, that happens too. It would surprise you, these hybrids that come. Then the pruning is so important. It will stand almost any amount of pruning. “Pluck off the branches that have not brought forth good fruit, and cast them into the fire [then you have to rake up the orchard]. . . . The servant said unto him: Let us prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it a little longer, that perhaps it may bring forth good fruit unto thee, . . . and the end soon cometh.” Then there’s corruption. The tree can be spoiled, and once it’s gone what are you going to do? He tries desperately to save it. He’s talking about Israel now, you see. Verse 30: “And they came to the tree whose natural branches had been broken off, and the wild branches had been grafted in; and behold all sorts of fruit did cumber the tree.”

Israel is mixed up with everybody here, and I think you could show that if you put a sociologist on that. And it had tastes of every sort. There was this bad tree that had no good fruit on it at all. The Lord said, “What shall we do unto the tree, that I may preserve again good fruit thereof unto mine own self?” And the servant wanted to save it. They grafted in the oleaster, but what happened? In verse 37 the wild branches overrun the roots. They take complete control of the fruit, and the roots begin to perish. The natural branches become corrupt, and then they all become corrupt. Then the poor Lord of the vineyard wept because it was a precious olive tree, and he said, “What could I have done more for my vineyard?” He keeps calling it a vineyard because *olive grove* is two words. They use the same word for both (*kerem*), and in English we prefer one word to using two, I’m sure. It’s greater economy. So all had become corrupted. It’s getting bad in verse 42: “And now all the trees of my vineyard are good for nothing save it be to be hewn down and cast into the fire.” This is the last day. Boy, this is where we are now, you see. It’s cause for alarm. “Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?” He goes into that and it goes on and on. Verse 77: “And then cometh the season and the end; and my vineyard will I cause to be burned with fire.” That’s the final end, and you can see all the episodes in between—all the things that can happen to Israel.

Then he explains it in chapter 6. “This is my prophecy—that the things which this prophet Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, in the which he likened them unto a tame olive tree, must surely come to pass.” So he’s going to explain what’s going to happen to the house of Israel. Zenos’s [account] is in terms of the olive tree. This is in terms of Jacob himself. He begins at the end. He is going to go backwards. Then the rest are flashbacks. But he tells how it’s all going to end. (This is a common dramatic form; especially in movies they do this. You see what brought this all to pass, and then it goes back and tells you the story of how this came to be.) He’s talking about “the last time, that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard.” Verse 3: “And the world shall be burned with fire [wow!]. And how merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches [but they don’t like it; they fight him]. . . . They are a stiffnecked and a gainsaying people.” Then why bring a plan to such people? The gospel has no better chance on the earth than a snowball in hell. People aren’t going to accept it. They didn’t in the time of Moses, they didn’t in the time of Christ, and they don’t today. They gave Joseph a bad time from the first, you see. Then John tells us why they didn’t [accept the gospel]. As he said in the beginning, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. . . . The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (see John 1:11–12). Now isn’t that worth doing, just for a few, if it is possible? There’s the *power* again. And we have here: “They are a stiffnecked and a gainsaying people; but as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God.” So there are some that won’t, and for the sake of them it’s worth it.

That's what the test is all about, as John tells us—that as many as would hearken become sons of God.

So the theme is *repent* because all are capable and all are culpable. Notice that He cleaves to us. It's up to us. God is waiting for any old time that you're willing to come around. Remember, he will cleave unto you. "And while his arm of mercy is extended towards you in the light of the day, harden not your hearts." But work, he says, for the day cometh when no man can. The day isn't going to be here forever, so it's very urgent. He uses the expression, Don't procrastinate, whatever you do. Don't put it off because an awful lot is at stake here. Why would we make just a few short years [decide our situation for] a whole stretch of eternity hereafter? Could that thing really be so? It really is. There are just a few bugs to get out of our existence here to perpetuate our life. The Russians think they can do it and make a person practically immortal. They can extend life, but then you have this. There's no [point in] living forever unless you have reason to live forever. We'll come to that later, but Nephi explained that too—why you would live forever. He said you will cross that bridge when you get to it. The Lord will tell you everything you are going to do hereafter, and you don't worry about it as you go. When you get there you will know there is plenty to be done, but meantime you can't bear the thought of living for a thousand years. It would bore you stiff. We have Heinlein's stories about "the old ones," those who can't die. They are the miserable old ones. They suffer unspeakably. They are bored because they have seen everything. "*Omnia fui et nihil expedit*," as the emperor Severus said, "I've seen everything, and nothing is worth bothering about."

But you have to go on living. As we learn here in the Book of Mormon very definitely, they cannot die. You have to go on whether you like it or not because that has already been arranged. As I said, in theory there's no reason why that can't be so. The second law [determines] why we break down—why we last just a particular period and then suddenly shut off, as if it were arranged ahead of time. If you can live ten years, why can't you live twenty? If you can live twenty, why can't you live thirty? You can go up to the hundreds, etc. And we cover quite a stretch of time. As I said, I have personally and intimately been acquainted with people whose lives stretch more than 250 years apart. I have known them personally, my grandfather and my grandson. The one will be living 253 years from the time the other was born, if he lives even as long as I have. So there you are. There is a time limit. Notice verse 6 says *today*. "Yea, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; for why will ye die? . . . After ye have been nourished by the good word of God all the day long, will ye bring forth evil fruit [there's the vineyard], that ye must be hewn down and cast into the fire?"

So is the crisis so great? The word *crisis* means "the point of judgment, the point of decision." Why would you be hewn down and thrown in the fire just for being a human being—fiddling around and doing the things that normal human beings do, making a fool of yourself the way we all do, etc.? Why would you be damned like that? Hewn down and cast into the fire. You have to make it [the decision]; you have to insist on it, he says. Notice verse 8: "Behold, will ye reject these words? Will ye reject the words of the prophets; and will ye reject all the words which have been spoken concerning Christ . . . and deny the good word of Christ, and the power of God . . . and quench the Holy Spirit." Notice there are steps by which you do it here. First, you reject it. Then you vocally deny it. Then you quench it and do everything you can to stamp out the Holy Spirit. Then you mock it; you make fun of the whole thing. You mock the great plan of redemption.

Well, what do you expect if you do that? You've asked for it. You "make a mock of the great plan of redemption, which hath been laid for you [you'll never get home now if you are not careful, if you miss this time]. Know ye not that if ye will do these things, that the power of the redemption and the resurrection, which is in Christ, will bring you to stand with shame and awful guilt before the bar of God?" By that, you'll have to stand at the resurrection and stand before the Lord in shame and awful guilt. You are brought back to stand trial. Then there's this lake of fire and brimstone. This is a metaphor. "Ye must go away into that lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames are unquenchable, and whose smoke ascendeth up forever and ever, which lake of fire and brimstone is endless torment [that is what *brimstone* represents—just like the olive tree and the house of Israel; you're not a real olive tree; don't get that idea]. O then, my beloved brethren, repent ye, and enter in at the strait gate, and continue in the way which is narrow, until ye shall obtain eternal life." There is a proper course to follow. It's rather an easy one, but you have to watch now.

Now there is a character by the name of Sherem who challenges this teaching. He is included in here because he gave Jacob a bad time. He didn't want to take any of this, so this is the argument on the other side. This is the way most people go. He began to preach that there should be no Christ. As I said, I have plenty of friends who not only believe that Christ will never return, they don't believe for a minute that I believe it. They can't accept the idea that I would be fool enough to believe that, but I'm definitely sure of it. So he began to preach that there would be no Christ, "and he preached many things which were flattering unto the people." He gave them what they wanted to hear: God is dead, all is permitted. That's what they wanted to hear because, remember, these people were misbehaving. They were getting too rich, but above all they were being immoral. So they didn't want to hear this. What he told them was flattering to hear. There's no trouble at all; just go right ahead doing what you are doing. He was permissive, in other words, "that he might overthrow the doctrine of Christ." Notice that he was a rhetorician. He was a popular orator, a spellbinder. That meant a lot. Verse 4: "And he was learned, that he had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people [the vernacular; he knew how to manipulate]; wherefore, he could use much flattery, and much power of speech, according to the power of the devil." Make them feel good, butter them up. As Isaiah said, "They want to hear smooth things." Just talk smooth things to them and you are elected; you're in there. Joseph Smith said, "The devil is an orator." He certainly is. Jacob said, "For I truly had seen angels, and they had ministered unto me." But Sherem hadn't seen them. Sherem is being very orthodox. He thinks he is the religious one. He thinks he's pious. Notice that this is typical. You defend yourself by an attack. He said, Jacob is leading the people astray; he is teaching false doctrine. Constantine called the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325, and Eusebius was there. He was there in person; he was a friend of the emperor. They were discussing things such as seating problems and all this protocol stuff, and they started debating issues. Finally, a rustic farmer who had been attending up in the gallery, got up and said he didn't know whether it was the greater miracle to make a stone speak or to make a philosopher shut up. Which is the greater miracle? Anyway, Sherem was this kind, and he was powerful. So he came up to him and said, "Brother Jacob [speaking to him very benevolently], I have sought much opportunity that I might speak unto you [I've been wanting to speak to you for a long time; he is posing as the zealous champion of truth]; for I have heard and also know that thou goest about much, preaching that which ye call the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ [oh, no]. And ye have led away much of this people that they pervert the right way of God, and keep not the law of Moses which is the right way." See, he is teaching the orthodox way; he's doing what's right. He's Sherem, the defender of the faith of orthodoxy.

And you notice that it's not a case of believer versus nonbeliever, or atheist versus theist. No, this is our simplistic view of things. We always think of the Book of Mormon as these conflicts between the good guys and the bad guys, the people that believed and the people that didn't. No, he wasn't an atheist at all. We keep "the law of Moses which is the right way. . . . And now behold, I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is blasphemy [what you are teaching]." What does the word *blasphemy* mean? What does it come from? What is *blasphemia*? To speak *blaptō*, which is what? It's *to treat lightly*, not with contempt, but not seriously. It is not to damn something to hell. It is not to say horrible and tremendous things, but *to treat lightly*. It's much worse to treat the gospel as trivia and laugh it off (you can't reach people like that) than it is to attack it savagely and say, "I'll show you where it is wrong," and really do some studying because then you are in danger. But that's what *blasphemy* is. We get the impression that when a person speaks blasphemy, he has spoken terrible things. He has denounced and used vile language. That's not it. *Blasphemy* is treating it lightly, "This is nothing; we'll laugh it off." It's laughing something off, which is the best argument if you want to crush something that you can't answer. You just laugh it off and walk out of the room. They ask plenty of questions about the gospel, but they never wait for the answers. I've noticed that, and I've had a lot of talks with some of those people.

Verse 7: "I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is blasphemy; for no man knoweth of such things; for he cannot tell of things to come [that's true; you can't know for yourself]. . . . But behold, the Lord God poured in his Spirit into my soul." That's an interesting expression. Is this a circumlocution for inspiration? He uses these eloquent expressions. The impression you get is a sudden idea or sudden inspiration. It suddenly came to him, just like that. We might express it differently. While I was talking with Sherem, he poured his spirit into my soul—I knew exactly what I was to say; it was not myself speaking, "insomuch that I did confound him in all his words [I was able to stop him cold—that was it]." He doesn't tell us the debate that took place in which he confounded him. All the schools are founded on *disputatio*, the disputation. That's what you do. That's how you train rhetoricians. We have mock courts here to train lawyers, etc. Rhetoric is a vile profession, as Socrates explained to his friend Gorgias, who was the greatest rhetorician of his time. Do you know our word *gorgeous* comes from his name because of the style of rhetoric he introduced. He came from Sicily, and he opened a school with his friend Protagoras. He was the first person to make a million dollars teaching law and rhetoric, how to win cases and sway legislatures, etc. That's what he was.

Notice Sherem has already backtracked in verse 9. "And he said: If there should be a Christ, I would not deny him [that's all right; I'd accept him]; but I know that there is no Christ, neither has been, nor ever will be. And I said unto him: [well, what about the scriptures?] Believest thou the scriptures? And he said, Yea. And I said unto him: Then ye do not understand them; for they truly testify of Christ." The Atonement is the subject of the Old Testament. Since I've done this thing on the Atonement, that I was supposed to finish up today (there are a lot of footnotes), that has come home to me so strongly. The whole thing is atonement; the whole thing is the mission of the Messiah. That's what the whole Old Testament is about. Of course, the Jews won't accept that. But the scriptures "truly testify of Christ . . . and it also has been made manifest unto me by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, I know if there should be no atonement made all mankind must be lost." The atonement, the sacrifice of Isaac, was not complete. Isaac actually wasn't sacrificed. They say that's the atoning sacrifice.

Notice he gets a bit sarcastic here. He falls back on the thing you're sure he's going to fall back on, "Show me a sign." Give me a sign or a symbol. Verse 13: "Show me a sign by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the which ye know so much." You know so much about this Holy Ghost; you just try to tell me who the Holy Ghost is. This is very cynical and sarcastic. Jacob says he doesn't want to tempt God to show a sign. "Nevertheless, not my will be done; but if God shall smite thee, let that be a sign unto thee that he has power, both in heaven and in earth." Well, the guy had a severe stroke then. He was overwrought anyway; he had been losing the argument. I think he was all excited and ready to bust a blood vessel, so he collapsed completely and fell down. He had to be nourished for many days. He had a bad stroke and passed out completely. He was the high pressure type, Type A like me, that gets those things. We have to watch all the time, you see. When he came to himself, he asked that the people be gathered together. Verse 16: "I desire to speak unto the people before I shall die." It's clear because he was still claiming to be orthodox. He was still accepting the Bible, so he is still available. This brought him to repentance, and he saw that he had been wrong. "And he spake plainly unto them and denied the things which he had taught them, and confessed Christ." He had done it out of vanity; this happens all the time. As Faust says, "mit saurem Schweiss zu sagen brauche, was ich nicht weiss." Faust makes a lot of speeches on that; this hypocrisy worries him very much and makes him sick. "For I denied the Christ, and said that I believed the scriptures; and they truly testify of him." (Remember that *Christ* here is the Christian equivalent of *Messiah*, *mashûah*, which means *the Anointed*. *Chriō* is the Greek word for *anoint*, and *Christos* is one who had been anointed, *the Anointed One*. *Messiah* is the "one who has been anointed." *Jehōshuaî*, *Jesus Christ* means *the Savior, the Anointed One*.)

"I have thus lied unto God," [Sherem said]. . . . And it came to pass that when he had said these words he could say no more, and he gave up the ghost, . . . [The multitude were impressed] and they were overcome that they fell to the earth." You notice in the Book of Mormon they fall to earth quite often when they are overpowered; there's this spontaneous falling to earth. There are formal and traditional responses to certain stress, and they differ very greatly. For example, in the German classroom if you like what a teacher says, everybody starts stamping on the wooden floor just like that until the whole building shakes. If you like it that's perfectly all right—that's accepted. If you don't like what he says [that's only fair], you hiss until you raise the ceiling. That's all right; you can do that. They are much more outspoken and much less restrained than we are. With an Anglo-Saxon stiff upper lip, we never indulge in things like that. Above all we don't collapse and fall down, but that's a common Oriental gesture. That's the way you salute. That's the way you recognize things. Five times a day you put your little rug on the ground, and you fall down on your face. This is called *proskynēsis*. It means "falling right down and kissing the ground." The *proskynēsis* is a very common way of demonstration in the ancient world. When the emperor came, there was a *proskynēsi*. When the pope passed, everybody fell down flat. You're supposed to be overpowered; this is the idea. With the Romans you were supposed to blind yourself like this. The dazzling light of the king is so great that you put your hand in front of your face to protect your eyes. That's the *proskynēsis* and the salute.

Of course, by the miracle Sherem had tipped the scales here. The people had attended the disputation here, and it was going both ways. Then Sherem lost it. When Jacob won hands down, it made a big impression. They were ready to be impressed now. Then Sherem himself came and admitted [his wrongdoing] and confessed it. Then when he

died, the multitude immediately went down in the *proskynēsis* and recognized [what had happened] with this spontaneous gesture which is very common in the Orient. “Since when have thy knees forgot their duty?” etc. If you don’t do that, of course, you are in real trouble in the presence of the emperor or someone like that. *Richard II* has something to say about that. Verse 23: “And it came to pass that peace and the love of God was restored again among the people.” So he [seems to] end on a happy note. But they tried to restore the Lamanites, and this was hopeless. He says they couldn’t move them. Verse 24: “But it all was vain, for they delighted in wars and bloodshed, and they had an eternal hatred against us, their brethren. And they sought by the power of their arms to destroy us continually.” There were these blood feuds. You thought it was going to end upbeat, but it ends on a very sad note in an extremely eloquent passage.

I think there is nothing in the Book of Mormon more moving than this. The prose sounds like a solemn dirge here in verse 26: “I, Jacob, began to be old; and the record of this people being kept on the other plates of Nephi, wherefore, I conclude this record declaring that I have written according to the best of my knowledge, by saying [and this is it] that the time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and hated of our brethren, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our days.” Notice the spondees. It reminds me more of the border ballads of Scotland than anything else, like “Edward,” “Clark Sanders,” “The Percy,” “The Douglas,” and “Bonny George Campbell.” They are very sad. Percy’s *Reliques* and the border ballads of Scotland are very sad.

There came some men by middle day,  
Who saw their sport and went their way  
And brought the king that very night  
Who brought my bier and slew my knight.

There are these terrible stories they tell of the border wars because of perpetual feuds. So this situation exists. Look at Ireland today. My great-grandparents moved over from Edinburgh to Ulster. My great-grandfather was the first branch president in Ireland—the one I remember, who was twenty years old when Joseph Smith died. My grandmother left Ireland when she was seventeen, and she said she never wanted to go back. This was way back in those days. She said all she could remember in Belfast was blood running down the gutter. She said she could just see that blood in the gutters. So these feuds go on forever and ever. This is one of those perennial feuds that you have in the Book of Mormon. Of course, you get it in the Old World all the time. Look what they are having in Lebanon today. Is there ever going to be any settlement? This is the same feeling of blood, hatred, despair, and mourning out our days that you find in the Book of Mormon. It’s Oriental and Near Eastern. This is Palestine today. It’s sad—the Jews and the Arabs are having terrible times.

Now we come to the book of Enos. This is a fascinating book because it is a very good portrait study. Notice in verse 27 it says that Jacob gave the plates to his son Enos. Enos received the plates as his successor to the highest religious office in the state. He was the grandson of Lehi, so he was a blue blood. He would have been the king, but remember that Nephi’s people anointed his brothers to be the high priests. The kings were apparently minor figures, as you find them very often in history. The king is not the important person at all. Enos would be “king presumptive” as far as that goes. But the kings were

named Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Nephi. You never read about them here, but this isn't the historical part anyway. But still Enos was a person of great importance who would be the next high priest. In this religious community, the kings are not the real leaders. The kings were often ghost kings, like the queen [Elizabeth II of Great Britain]. She opened Parliament this week and read a speech to Parliament, which was her policy for the coming year. She didn't know what the speech said until she read it in Parliament; she didn't write it at all. It was written for her by Parliament. Then she just read the speech as if she was giving the orders for the whole thing.

Now Enos is out hunting. The best way to keep a pretender to the throne or an aspiring prince from getting into trouble and trying to jump the gun, of course, is to send him hunting (I brought something along about that, I think).

“Oh where ha'e ye been, Lord Randall my son?  
O where ha'e ye been, my handsome young man?”  
“I ha'e been to the wild wood: mother, make my bed soon,  
For I'm weary wi' hunting, and fain wald lie down.”

[He has been poisoned. The last line is not the way Brother Nibley quoted it.]

See, people are always trying to get rid of him, so they send him out hunting to be safe. But it's not to be safe when you go out hunting. Remember what happened to William II, the son of William the Conqueror. He was redheaded and he went out hunting in the forest one day. A fellow called Tirel was hunting, and William was shot. It was a political thing, and he was killed. He said he took William's red head for a squirrel. Well, maybe he did, but it's not safe for princes to hunt alone. Enos is hunting alone here. What happened to Siegfried? He was the prince and successor. Remember who came up and stabbed him in the back while they were hunting? He was hunting alone, and Gunther came up behind him and put a spear in his back. That was the end of Siegfried, so kings shouldn't hunt alone. There's a recent history of Persia by Rafsanjani (another one) who counts that no less than sixty-seven shahs of Persia (princes) were murdered on the hunt because you can have all sorts of accidents on the hunt, you see. How convenient to get rid of him. There is hardly a single shah in all the history of Persia, over a thousand years, that succeeded the person before him legitimately, as a son or anything else. It was always somebody else. Every shah fought the next shah and plotted against him. He said no less than sixty-seven shahs of Persia were killed on the hunt.

So here is a prince going on the hunt, and he is wrestling before God. He tells us he is not having much fun here. He comes out to think about things, and he does. That's a situation in which you can do it. Remember another person who went out hunting and was thinking about things in the woods? He had just been married a year when he left his wife and baby and retreated to the woods. That was Gautama Buddha, Siddhartha. He was a member of a princely family, a Rajan. The Rajan were kinglets, like Jacob and Enos. Jacob was not virtual ruler, but he had considerable clout in the state. That's what Buddha's father was; he had that influence too. But Buddha starting thinking about the worthlessness of it all. Well, his father didn't want him to get religion, so he surrounded him with all sorts of luxuries and things to distract his attention—the beautiful damsels and all that—with everything you can imagine. That spoiled him even more. He saw the worthlessness of it all; he wasn't getting anywhere. The worthlessness of the world just gnawed at him. He emerged with a totally different philosophy—the absolute, diametrical opposite of our friend Enos. It was the same situation. He was probably born in the same

year as Enos. He was born in 563 B.C. You can figure out that was just about the time Enos was born. Enos and the Buddha were the same age. Gautama was his family name, and Siddhartha, the prince, [was his given name]. *Buddha* means *the Enlightenment*; that was the name he got. He retreated from the world, sat under the popple tree, and had his revelations. He founded the religion which had more members than any other. But it is a philosophy; it's not really a religion. There are two basic principles. The first is, "There is no *I*; there is no *ego*. You are going to be absorbed into Nirvana." He went the opposite, you see. He had all this luxury and everything. What did it mean? Nothing, and it obsessed him. So what are we? We are nothing. Just forget that—forget any projects, forget any ifs, and be absorbed. That is just the opposite of Enos, where it is the individual who is going to live eternally. He is going to be exalted and go on. The other is just to be absorbed. One part of the philosophy is, "Don't expect anything, and you won't be disappointed." The other is, "The five senses betray us and don't show us reality at all." We don't see reality, we are not going anywhere, and you are not you. It's denial of the whole thing. On that is based a philosophy of life, self-control, behavior, etc.

Notice that he had been taught in his father's language, "and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He was a very thoughtful young man, and he really had a conscience. The uselessness of his life was worrying him sick. He says, "And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins." Notice, it wasn't like Jacob wrestling with God (not the angel; it's translated "the angel" in our Bible, but that's not correct). When you wrestle before God, that means you try to . . . What does a wrestler do when he starts to compete? He tries to strike position. They have to take up a position or a stance—you decide your approach, etc. [Suppose] you have been living in the world of daily life and been completely preoccupied with trivial things ("for to be carnally minded is death" comes strongly to me all the time; carnally minded is concerned with anything related to this world). If you think about that and then you are going to approach God, you can't do it just cold like that. You can't just say, "Hey God, listen to me; I have something to say." You are facing the Most High here, and you can't put anything over on him. He can see right through you, so you had better be careful what you say. It is going to be to your great advantage to see through yourself and everything else because he is going to see through you. So you wrestle with it; you have a struggle to tear yourself loose from your preoccupations and thoughts and your petty ideas. And to keep concentrated during prayer takes some effort. That is why in the ancient Christian circle, you concentrate your mind, as in a burning glass, on a particular object. It takes great concentration; it's not easy.

With Enos it's a wrestle, and he is not content with his life at all. He feels he is not living up to his capacity or anything else. It's like a prince having a good time, wasting his time. He is hunting now and probably hunts too much. He says, This is getting me nowhere. He makes it very clear here. He went to hunt beasts in the forests, "and the words which I had often heard my father speak [they kept going through his head] concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart [he couldn't get them out. When he was hunting, he wouldn't want anything to do with that—riding along thinking of these things, or walking as the case may be]. And my soul hungered." He really needed something. I see the time is up now, so we'll leave hungry in that case. It won't do us any harm. We have four more meetings, and we may be able to get as far as the middle of Mosiah. Mosiah is an extremely important book. That is absolutely tops. It takes a different tone entirely from these others.