

## Podcast 116: True Vine, Part 1

**This is Part 1 of a special series on the "True Vine" where Denver answers the question, "Why is Christ referred to as the 'True Vine' in scripture, and what can we learn from this analogy?"**

**DENVER:** Once again, Joseph is called by name—this is verse 33 (see JSH 1:32-33; see also JSH 3:2 RE). He was afraid; the fear soon left him. The reason he was afraid was because he was seeking forgiveness of his sins. A perfectly white, bright, lit individual appears who represents the cleanliness of heaven itself. Joseph, in contrast to that... He's inquiring to know about his sins. Now, a visibly cleansed being stands before him; he's afraid. And why is he afraid?—because, once again, you see the remarkable contrast. I know what lies in my heart. I know what failings I have had, and I know this being can see through me. Therefore, I need **something** that will remove from me my fear. *He called me by name.* It's the same thing. Moroni dispels it by letting him know: We have a brotherhood; we have a relationship. *Fear soon left me. He called me by name* (ibid, vs. 32-33; vs. 2-3 RE; emphasis added).

Well, this is what we want to talk about. He tells him about the stuff, the accoutrements that he's gonna be handed, in verse 34 and 35 (ibid; vs. 3 RE). But then he gets, in verse 36 (vs. 4 RE), and this is where... Ooooh, this is where we've got something now. This is Moroni delivering a message, but his message is not like we find in the King James version of the Bible. He says: *Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea,...all that do wickedly shall burn as stubble; for **they [they]** that come shall burn them, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch* (ibid, vs. 37; vs. 4 RE; emphasis added).

*Root, branch:* genealogical words. *They that come:* who are they?

*Again, he quoted the fifth verse...: Behold, I will reveal unto you the Priesthood, by the hand of Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. He...quoted the next verse differently [he said]: ...he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming. (JSH 1:38-39; see also JSH 3:4 RE)*

Oh, we'll probably get this parsed about Spanish Fork in the coming year. Everything about this is telling you something that is remarkably different from where we find ourselves:

- The day is coming that will burn them. When?
- *They that come.* Who?
- *Neither root nor branch.* This is genealogical.
- Elijah and the Priesthood. We'll talk about that on another day.
- Children get planted in their hearts.

- *Promises made to the fathers.*
- Children's hearts turned to their Fathers.

There is so much in that that we need to pick apart; we need to understand. And we're gonna go there because understanding this is understanding the foundation of Zion.

The foundation of Zion consists largely in the reconnecting the children (as a consequence of the promises that were made to the Fathers) back **to** the Fathers so that there might be a wielded link that connects the children who are on the earth with the Fathers who are in heaven—not your kindred dead that are in the spirit world. They are in desperate need of your ministrations to save them. Connecting yourself to them is to connect yourself with the, essentially, the damned, the dead, the disembodied. The Fathers who are in heaven are the ones to whom you need to form the link. (And I've written that paper on it which I assume some of you have read. And if you haven't, just send a note to the blog, and I'll email it to you. It's *The Mission of Elijah Reconsidered*.) But see, the whole purpose behind this is to fix this problem because if it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted—utterly wasted at His coming.

Then he says: *He quoted the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, saying that it was about to be fulfilled* (JSH 1:40; see also JSH 3:4 RE).

Okay, let's go back to that 11th chapter of Isaiah because—Man! Have we made a mess of that! Okay, this is *about to be fulfilled*.

*There shall come forth* [this is chapter 11 of Isaiah]— *There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse* (Isaiah 11:1; see also Isaiah 5:4 RE)... The *Rod* is a servant who is a descendant of Jesse—who is a Levite—and Ephraim, unto whom is rightly belonging the priesthood. Keep your finger there on that chapter 11 of Isaiah and turn back to Doctrine and Covenants section 113, and you'll see where these words are explained.

*Who is the Stem...spoken of... Verily thus saith the Lord: It is Christ... [Verse 3]  
What is the Rod spoken of in the fifth verse of the 11th chapter of Isaiah, that should come of the Stem of Jesse? Behold...saith the Lord: It is a servant [a servant!] in the hands of Christ, who is partly a descendant of Jesse as well as of Ephraim, or of the house of Joseph, on whom there is laid much power. (D&C 113:1-4; see also T&C 129:1-2 RE)*

Well, look, until you succeed, you fail. I don't care who comes along claiming whatever they want to claim. Until the work is done, you can't take credit for it—period. There's all kinds of nonsense that circulates about “Ooooh, who has the keys? Button, button who's got the button?” Look, someone's going to do a work. When the work is done, you will know. Until the work is done, no one can be identified with the role—period. It is arrogance; it is pretentiousness; it is foolishness for anyone to step forward and say: “I, I, I am that man!”

Do the work. Finish the course. Fulfill the covenant. You do that, you can take the name. Until you do the work, it's just noise.

So, there's gonna come forth:

*A rod out of the stem of Jesse...a Branch shall grow out of his roots: ...the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and...the fear of the LORD. [Oh, thank God! Someone will finally fear the Lord more than they fear man. I look forward to that moment.] And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: ...he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth [in this context, it is the word of God], and with the breath of his lips [he shall] slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, ...faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf...shall dwell with the lamb, ...the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. [These things are shortly to come to pass.] And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. [You see, it's knowledge, full of knowledge of the Lord. That's what you have to lay hold on.] And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left... (Isaiah 11:1-11; see also Isaiah 5:4-5 RE)*

Well, this shall shortly come to pass—not then, not that day—by and by.

You know, when a branch is spoken of, if you look at John 15:1-6 (see also John 9:10 RE; Testimony of St. John 10:17 RE)... I'm not going to do that because our time is far spent, but Christ gives a sermon about Him being the *true vine*, about how you cannot bear fruit unless you are connected to the true vine. Once again, that is a genealogical term. That is a *family of God* term. That is a *son of God* term. And He intends to make many sons of God.

Joseph is receiving in this first interview with the angel Moroni an announcement about the first indications of the restoration of God's intent to restore a holy family. God is telling us what **He** wants—**He, God**—wants to have upon the earth again: His family. But **we** must respond—**we**. This is your dispensation; this is your time. You came down here with the intent of living and finding the things that will bring you back. This is your opportunity. Don't let some other group claim that it doesn't belong to you. These scriptures are only going to be fulfilled when enough people awake and arise to realize that it is devolving

upon you the obligation to find, to heed, to seek, to search, to pray, to obey, and to form what is necessary in order to fulfill all the promises and the covenants that were made to the Fathers.

Well, tonight we're gonna talk about covenants and, in particular, covenants that are being referred to in a verse that we find in the Joseph Smith History, verse 39—Moroni changing the content of the text of Malachi to render it to Joseph Smith (on this fall equinox occasion) to read this way: *And he shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers. If it were not so, the whole earth would be utterly wasted at his coming* (JSH 1:39; see also JSH 3:4 RE).

So, there is some peril if we do not have our hearts turned to these Fathers. That peril is that we will be *utterly wasted at his coming* if we fail. But His coming is not limited merely to the singular *Him*, being the Lord. If you go back to verse 37, it says: **they** that come shall burn them. And therefore, when He comes, *they* that come with Him shall burn those who are unprepared, those who are scheduled for being *utterly wasted* at His coming. And so, we need to inquire into what, exactly, it is the promises were; who the Fathers were that the promises were made to; and then avoid this peril of those who come burning them—that *it shall leave them neither root nor branch* (terms which, in Boise, I referred to as being genealogical) because it becomes the end of the line at that point.

In looking at the promises that were made, I want to go back to Second Nephi chapter 3 and begin there (which we also referred to earlier) because when we're tracking back the covenants that were made, and we're talking about the promises that were made to the Fathers, and we're trying to identify who the Fathers are, we get a real advantage in making the determination by what we have in Lehi's blessing to his son, Joseph.

Beginning at verse 4 of chapter 3 of Second Nephi, Lehi says, *I am a descendant of Joseph who was carried [away] captive into Egypt. And great were the covenants of the Lord which he made unto Joseph* (2 Nephi 3:4; see also 2 Nephi 2:2 RE).

As soon as you encounter the word *covenants*, an alarm ought to go off because much of what's going to go on in the history of the world is gonna go on as a consequence of these covenants that have been made—one of the possessors of those promises and covenants being Joseph who had been carried away captive into Egypt.

*Wherefore, Joseph truly saw our day* [meaning Lehi's day—and when Lehi is talking, he's talking about events that he believed that Joseph of Egypt had foreseen about what would happen in his own day]. *...He obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of his loins the Lord God would raise up a righteous branch unto the house of Israel; not the Messiah, but a branch which was to be broken off, nevertheless, to be remembered in the covenants of the Lord that the Messiah should be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the spirit of power, unto the bringing of them out of darkness....Joseph truly testified,...* [verse 6] *A seer shall the Lord...God raise up, who shall be a choice*

*seer unto the fruit of my loins. Yea, Joseph truly said: Thus saith the Lord unto me: A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins... [and he goes on to talk about... This choice seer is going to bring...] them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with thy fathers. (2 Nephi 3:5-7; see also 2 Nephi 2:2-3 RE)*

So, the assignment that is given to this choice seer, descendant of Joseph, is that this person is going to bring to the world, to us, to the descendants, to the people in the last days *knowledge [concerning] covenants which [God had] made with thy fathers—thy fathers in this statement being: thy Fathers, Joseph of Egypt. So, the promises that God made to Fathers before Joseph of Egypt—a seer is going to restore the knowledge about that. It may be complex wording, but it's dealing with very simple events, and the identities are important.*

*I will give unto him [that is, this choice seer] a commandment that he shall do none other work...(ibid, vs. 8; vs. 3 RE). That is to say, he will not cause Zion to come. That was not the assignment of the choice seer. Joseph Smith was not in charge of and not required to do the work of bringing again Zion.*

*None other work, save the work which I shall command him...I will make him great in mine eyes; for he shall do my work...he shall be great [and] like unto Moses, whom I...said I would [deliver] up [verse11] But a seer [I will] raise up out of the fruit of thy loins;...unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins. (ibid, vs. 9-11; vs. 3 RE)*

In verse 12, it talks about how there's gonna be this restoration of *knowledge of their fathers in the latter days...also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord (ibid, vs. 12; vs. 4 RE).*

And then in 15, it says, *his name shall be called after me...it shall be after the name of his father [after me being Joseph of Egypt—so, the name should be Joseph; that will also be the name of his father]. He shall be like unto me; for the thing, which the Lord [God] shall bring forth by his hand, by the power of the Lord shall bring my people unto salvation (2 Nephi 3:15; see also 2 Nephi 2:5 RE).*

And then he goes on, and he tells Lehi (he tells his son) in verse 23: *Because of this covenant [that is, the one that was done with Joseph of Egypt], [he] [the son of Lehi] [is] blessed; for [his] [the son of Lehi's] seed shall not be destroyed...they shall hearken unto the words of the book. And there shall rise up one mighty among them [I talked about that in Boise] (2 Nephi 3:23-24; ibid, vs. 7 RE).*

And so, if Joseph Smith fulfills the prophecy that was delivered to Joseph that is recovered, in part, in the Book of Mormon in this third chapter of Second Nephi, then Joseph Smith should give to us the ability to know something about these covenants that were made with the Fathers.

Well, we do not have to rely upon merely what we have in Second Nephi chapter 3. Nor do we have to have the brass plates, as it turns out, because Joseph Smith restored the prophecy of Joseph of Egypt. And you can read it right now in the Joseph Smith Translation, beginning in Genesis chapter 50 at verse 24. It reads slightly different than Lehi's summation given. And Lehi's choice of what he adds in, and what he selects out, and what Joseph says has some interesting things. It's absolutely worth your time to study out all the differences and to pick apart what it is that Lehi did because it tells you much about Father Lehi, what he chose to include, and what he chose to pass over.

However, for our purposes tonight, I want to look at what was said to Joseph that we find in the Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis chapter 50, beginning at verse 24. Joseph of Egypt says: *The Lord [hath] visited me and I have obtained [a] promise of the Lord* (see also Genesis 12:36 RE). This is what Lehi will refer to in his prophecy to his son Joseph as a *covenant* because when the Lord delivers a promise to someone, He delivers it by way of covenant. God is bound by His word. Therefore, when He delivers a promise, it is a covenant.

*I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins [this is the covenant with Joseph of Egypt—out of **his** loins], the Lord God will raise up a righteous **branch** out of **my** loins [so, that is talking about Joseph of Egypt, one of the sons of Israel, one of the twelve tribes]; and [now we're changing topics] and unto **thee**, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel [so, this is not just the descendants of Joseph; this is **all** of the twelve tribes, raised up unto **all** of the twelve tribes], a prophet; (not the Messiah who is called Shiloh;) and **this** prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage. [That's a covenant about deliverance to be had for **all** the tribes of Israel, not merely the descendants of Joseph.] (JST Genesis 50:24; see also Genesis 12:36 RE; emphasis added)*

*And it shall come to pass that they [that is, all of Israel] shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country; nevertheless they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh; for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days [Now, when is that? Is it when he was resurrected, and He appears in Third Nephi? Or is the latter days some other time?], in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom. A **seer** shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of **my** [that is, **Joseph's**] loins [different topic, different person, different time frame]. Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers [this is Joseph speaking; his Fathers would include at a minimum, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—his fathers, in the plural] unto me [so, the Lord God of Joseph's Fathers said unto him], A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy [that is, Joseph's] loins;...he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy [that is, Joseph's] loins; and unto him will I give [a] commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy [that is, Joseph's] loins, **[and] his brethren** [that is, other members of Israel]. And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the*

*covenants which I have made **with thy fathers**. (ibid, vs. 24-28; vs. 36-38 RE; emphasis added)*

Now we're beginning to have laid out in the restoration through Joseph Smith, part of what it is that we need to know in order to avoid being utterly wasted.

*He [the seer] shall do whatsoever work I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he [that is, Joseph of Egypt's descendant-seer] he shall be great like unto **him** whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel [him that he's going to raise up is Moses, okay?] ...for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt [this is Moses];...he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall [be known] that he is of thy house [that is, O house of Israel—that's the house, not Joseph's—the house of Israel]; for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter, and shall be called her son. And again [so, we're changing topics again] a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy [that is, Joseph's] loins, and unto him [that is, this seer] will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins [that's Joseph's seer, and he's to give us God's word]. (JST Genesis 50:28-30; see also Genesis 12:38-39 RE; emphasis added)*

And then he goes on to say in verse 31:

*The fruit of thy loins [that is, Joseph's loins] shall write,...the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write;...that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins,...also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false [doctrine]...laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins [a yet-future event], and bringing them to a knowledge of their **fathers** in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord. (JST Genesis 50:31; see also Genesis 12:39 RE; emphasis added)*

Joseph's seer is to do this. This is what Moroni is telling Joseph in verse 39 of the Joseph Smith History.

*Out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day when my work shall go forth among **all** my people [all my people include all of the various branches of Israel], which shall restore **them**, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days (ibid, vs. 32; vs. 39 RE; emphasis added).*

That's the objective, to fix and reconnect the house of Israel, restoring them in the last days.

*And that seer will I bless, and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you [Joseph of Egypt]; for I will remember you [Joseph of Egypt] from generation to generation; and his [that latter-day seer]*

*[his] name shall be called Joseph [as if the Lord Himself wanted to be had in remembrance in all generations, Joseph of Egypt—Joseph of Egypt who was sold into slavery; Joseph of Egypt who kept his faith; Joseph of Egypt who was sold into slavery by the jealousy of brothers whom he only sought to declare the truth to]. His name shall be called Joseph...it shall be after the name of his father [so, his father shall be that, too]; and he shall be like unto you [that is, like unto Joseph of Egypt]; for the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people unto salvation. And the Lord **sware** unto Joseph that he would preserve his [Joseph's] seed forever, saying, I will raise up Moses, and a rod shall be in his hand, and he shall gather together my people,...he shall lead them as a flock...he shall smite the waters of the Red Sea with his rod...He shall have judgment, and [he] shall write the word of the Lord...he shall not speak many words, for I will write unto him my law by [my] finger of mine own hand. And I will make a spokesman for him, and his name shall be called Aaron. And it shall be done unto thee in the last days also, even as I have sworn. (JST Genesis 50:33-36; see also Genesis 12:40-42 RE; emphasis added)*

So, the Lord to Joseph is swearing. It is from this text that Father Lehi lifts out what Father Lehi lifts out in order to write what he composes, in Second Nephi chapter 3, in the patriarchal blessing he gives to his son Joseph (the names, Joseph and the son named Joseph, commending to the mind of Lehi attention to this very material that we've just looked at).

And so, if the seer of the last days who was responsible for completing this assignment and fulfilling this foretold opportunity is Joseph Smith, then through Joseph Smith, we should be able to say: We can learn something about knowledge of covenants, covenants that were made with the Fathers.

And the seer will do none other work...

- He will have power to bring forth God's words;
- He will restore knowledge of their Fathers;
- He will restore knowledge of God's covenants;
- He will restore, ultimately, a basis that makes the house of Israel alive again;
- His name will be after Joseph of Egypt;
- It will be the same name as his father—that is, Joseph.

And in every particular, Joseph Smith seems to be the one about whom this is written and, therefore, doesn't seem that we need to look for another.

Chapter 4 of Second Nephi talks about... This is Nephi now, interjecting: *He* [that is, Joseph, verse 2 of chapter 4] *[He]* [Joseph of Egypt] *truly prophesied concerning all his seed* (2 Nephi 4:2; see also 2 Nephi 3:1 RE).



*All his seed* include not just the folks that were included in the tribe of Manasseh and through others that joined the party—Ephraim, descendants of Joseph in the Book of Mormon—but it includes as well other portions of the tribe of Joseph scattered wherever they were throughout the world, many of whom may be here among us tonight in your bloodlines.

Well, it's not a prophecy about Joseph's seed only. It's talking about the ministry of this latter-day prophet and this latter-day prophet restoring knowledge. Through Joseph, then, we should be able to find knowledge of covenants made to the Fathers and to identify who the Fathers are.

All right, so, I want to skip to the time period that is relevant to our day, in Jacob chapter 5, beginning at verse 48, because all the rest of that stuff is past history, and what we're trying to do now is to figure out from where we are how we get to the spot in which we might not be burned up, root and branch.

Beginning at verse 48: *And it came to pass that the servant said unto his master: Is it not the loftiness of [the] vineyard—have not the branches thereof overcome the roots which are good?* (Jacob 5:48; see also Jacob 3:22 RE).

That is to say, the roots, the original covenant, the original stock from which we reckon—they were good. But we've become lofty in the way in which we approach things, and as a consequence of that, we have done something that has so cumbered the construct of where we find ourselves that we've essentially destroyed the ability of the roots to do us any good.

*And because the branches have overcome the roots thereof, behold they grew faster than the strength of the roots, taking strength unto themselves [that is, their pride, their haughtiness; they decided that they were driving this and not the covenants that were originally made in the beginning]. Behold, I say, is this not the cause that the trees of thy vineyard have [all] become corrupted? And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard said unto the servant: Let us go to and hew down the trees of the vineyard and cast them into the fire, that they shall not cumber the ground of my vineyard, for I have done all. What could I have done more for my vineyard? But, behold, the servant said unto the Lord of the vineyard: Spare it a little longer. And the Lord said: Yea, I will spare it a little longer, for it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard.* (ibid, vs. 48-51; vs. 22-23 RE)

See, the Lord, despite the fact that He can't think of anything else that He's left undone in all of His preparations—and it is only that; it is only His preparations...

Go to Doctrine and Covenants section 19 and look at what it is that the Lord did for us in the atonement. In describing what He went through in verse 19 of section 19 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord says: *Glory be to the Father,...I partook and finished **my***

*preparations unto the children of men* (D&C 19:19; see also JSH 17:5 RE; T&C 4:5 RE). [That's what **He** did! And He has finished that. He finished His preparations.] But 20, now, is us: *Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power* (ibid, vs. 20; JSH vs. 5 RE; T&C vs. 6 RE). [That's us. He's done His part.]

What more could He do? Well, the only other thing He could do is rob us of our agency, and He's not prepared to do that because our existence then would come to an end—because without the freedom to choose, we don't have existence. Therefore, what more could He have done? But it does grieve Him that He's going to lose the trees of his vineyard.

*Wherefore* [the Lord says], *let us take of the branches of these which I have planted in the nethermost parts of my vineyard* [that's where we find ourselves], *and let us graft them into the tree from whence they came* [that is, let's restore the covenant or, at least, make it possible for it to be so]; *and let us pluck from the tree those branches whose fruit is most bitter* [that's coming], *and graft in the natural branches of the tree in the stead thereof. And this will I do that the tree may not perish, that, perhaps [perhaps, on the off-chance that... that without the ability to control the outcome; that depending upon what **you** decide to do], [perhaps, the Lord] may preserve unto [Himself] the roots thereof for mine own purpose* [that is, some of the promises that were made back to the Fathers, that their seed would not be utterly destroyed, might be fulfilled—perhaps]. (Jacob 5:52-53; see also Jacob 3:23 RE; emphasis added)

How great a number is required in order for the Lord to vindicate His promise? It's not numerosity. It's never been about a big volume. It's the quality of the salvation—because if you can save but one, what you have saved is infinite and eternal. And therefore, it continues on forever.

*Behold, the roots of the natural branches of the tree which I planted whithersoever I would are yet alive...* [Those promises remain; they are still in play. What the Father promised, what the covenants that were established did remain in play. It is **yet** possible for the Lord to vindicate everything that has been given.] *Wherefore, that I may preserve them also for mine own purpose, I will take of the branches of this tree, and I will graft them in unto them.* [This is the process by which the house of Israel is restored, not in the way that you mass-produce but in the way in which some rise up and lay hold upon that original religion that belongs to the Fathers, that came down from the beginning, that existed one time. That is to exist again.] *Yea, I will graft [into] them the branches of their mother tree, that I may preserve the roots also unto mine own self* [notice the word *mother* appears in there, too—the mother tree]...*when they [may] be sufficiently strong perhaps they may bring forth good fruit unto me, [that] I may yet have glory in the fruit of my vineyard.* (ibid, vs. 54; vs. 23 RE)

And then they go through things:

Verse 61: *Call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may prepare the way, that I may bring forth again the natural fruit...*(Jacob 5:61; Jacob 3:24 RE) That's the whole purpose of the endeavor. And when they call servants in order to help them, the labor of the servants is confined to trying to make the vineyard finally produce fruit again.

Verse 62: *Let us go to and labor with our might this last time, for behold the end draweth nigh, and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard* (ibid, vs. 62; vs. 25 RE).

He tells them again in verse 64: *The last time, for the end draweth nigh. And if it [so be] that these last grafts shall grow, and [shall] bring forth...natural fruit, then [ye shall] prepare the way for them, that they may grow* (ibid, vs. 64; vs. 25 RE).

Again in verse 71:

*For behold, this is the last time that I shall nourish my vineyard; for the end is nigh...the season speedily cometh;...if ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself against the time which will soon come. And it came to pass...the servants did go and labor with their might; and the Lord of the vineyard labored also with them...[because the Lord, in the last effort, is not going to leave the servants that He sent unattended to by **His** ministrations].* (ibid, vs. 71-72; vs. 26-27 RE)

This is why, in the verses we've been reading and every location we've been at, we find the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ direct, immediate, and involved. He continues to remain personally in charge of what is going to happen. But as it begins to happen, they have to sit back and watch because the question isn't: Is the laborer any less...any...well-prepared, any less capable, any less complete? The question is: What are the branches going to do?

You can minister all you want to the tree, but the tree has to respond sometimes to what they view as offensive pruning, offensive digging, offensive conduct of cutting and moving and grafting—and saying, “What you have here is error; what you have here is a bundle of false tradition that will damn you.”

You can plant the doctrine; you can restore the truth; you can have the Prophet Joseph Smith declare to you that he wants to be held to account for every word of the testimony that he delivers to you in a canonized set of scripture. But if you decide that you're going to throw that away, and you will not allow it to graft in and inform you about the nature of God and the nature of the religion that God is seeking to deliver to you, then the ministrations and the pruning and the care does not result in fruit. It simply results in a

rather damaged vineyard, continuing to produce precious little other than what is suitable to be gathered in bundles and burned: the *loftiness* of the people.

Grafting is to restore, to reconnect, to return or, in other words, to *plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to [the] fathers*. [That's what Moroni said. That's why Moroni reworked the language of Malachi in verse 39 of the Joseph Smith History.] *He shall plant in the hearts of the children the promises made to the fathers, and the hearts of the children shall turn to their fathers* (JSH 1:39; see also JSH 3:4 RE).

The work has been for one purpose. Joseph Smith began it and laid out all the information necessary for you to be able to identify who the Fathers are. And he laid out all the information necessary for you to be able to identify what the covenants were. And now the question is: Are we able, at this point, to preserve the roots (which is the Lord's purpose) by producing fruit in our day?

Well, I'm hoping, as a consequence of the things that we've looked at tonight, that you conclude that the choice seer in Second Nephi chapter 3, verse 7 and in Genesis chapter 50 was more than answered by the ministry of the Prophet Joseph Smith. And I hope that you conclude that the knowledge that was supposed to be restored through Joseph of the Fathers and the covenants given to the Fathers that will ultimately result in restoring Israel (that's referred to in Second Nephi chapter 3, verse 15) has also been something that Joseph Smith accomplished.

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The foregoing excerpts are taken from:

- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #1 entitled "Be of Good Cheer" given in Boise, Idaho on September 10, 2013.
- Denver's *40 Years in Mormonism Series*, Talk #4 entitled "Covenants" given in Centerville, Utah on October 6, 2013.